

The International CLASS STRUGGLE

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PERSPECTIVES OF SPANISH REVOLUTION

By JOAQUIN MAURIN

HOKUM ON PARADE

By Jay Lovestone

AMERICAN LABOR LOOKS AHEAD

By Will Herberg

COMMUNISM AND WAR

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Coalition Government

An Editorial

"IT IS indeed a momentous occasion when the bourgeois republic proclaims its need of socialist forces in its struggle against a military coup d'etat. Whatever the immediate cause may be, it is an event of great historical importance; an aggressive, militant Party cannot in my opinion ignore this kind offer of fate, this challenge of history."

In which organ sympathetic to the People's Front did the above paragraph appear? Does not the above citation sound familiar? As a matter of fact, we did not quote from any Socialist or Communist paper of 1936. The above statement is taken from an article by Jean Jaures written on June 24, 1899 hailing the entrance of Millerand into the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet.

Millerand—who was at the time a socialist deputy and not yet a pro-fascist senator—entered the ministry of Waldeck-Rousseau, the so-called ministry of "republican defense", during the Dreyfuss Affair. This set the first precedent for a reformist coalition policy in the Second International and led to a lengthy discussion thruout the entire international labor movement.

In view of the fact that the Socialist Party of France is today forming a coalition government in the name of the People's Front and the Communist Party of France is preparing to support this coalition and to agitate for its "final" success—also in the name of the People's Front—it is well to recall this discussion. Those who defended Jaures and Millerand and came out for the support of a left bourgeois government used the identical arguments that the exponents of the People's Front policy advance today.

Revolutionary Marxists such as Lenin, Plekhanov, Luxemburg, and even Kautsky and Guesde, still being Marxists at the time, attacked these arguments mercilessly. In the name of the People's Front, the C.P.F. cites any and all "traditions" of bourgeois France, Jeanne d'Arc and the Tricolor included. In doing so it discards the principles of Marxism-

Leninism and the traditions of the revolutionary French working class which under the leadership of Guesde, Lafargue and Vaillant fought against Millerand and his ilk.

Kautsky who at that time had not yet broken with Marxism wrote the following in an article entitled "The Republic and the Social Democracy in France" in the "Neue Zeit" of 1904-05:

"Why is the Republic in danger? . . . Because the working class which once hailed the republic as its liberator has become disillusioned with it. We cannot restore the confidence of the masses thru the preservation of the capitalist republic and parliamentary corruption. We must transform the government into a truly social republic and guard it against coup d'états by means of self-government and the arming of the people.

"The bourgeois republicans are attempting to persuade the masses that their immediate aim must be to save the republic in alliance with the bourgeoisie and thru the support of the bourgeois regime. It is therefore all the more necessary for Socialists to criticize the aims and methods of struggle of the bourgeoisie and to point out that the proletariat has very little to gain from such an alliance, that, moreover, the proletarian republic is quite different from the bourgeois republic, that the proletarian methods of saving the republic . . . are fundamentally different from the ways of the bourgeoisie, and that the Social Democracy is absolutely opposed to an alliance with the bourgeois republicans which would make it responsible for the deeds and misdeeds of the latter."

Thus wrote Kautsky on the policy which finds its expression today in the People's Front. His analysis of the advances made by the nationalists allied with the military against the republican at the time of the Dreyfuss Affair, is particularly applicable to the present situation in which fascism has declared war on bourgeois democracy.

The followers of the People's Front maintain that tho a coalition government cannot introduce socialism, it can at least realize certain urgent partial demands of the working class. Rosa Luxemburg replied to this argument which was advanced in defense of Millerand in the following manner: We quote from the article "A tactical problem" (July 6, 1899):

"It is true that the program of the Social Democracy contains many demands which could be accepted—in theory, at least—by a bourgeois government as well as by a bourgeois parliament. It would, therefore, appear at first glance that a socialist can serve the cause of the proletariat even in the government and in parliament and that he can strive to attain"

"But it must be kept in mind that in the struggle of the Social Democracy it is not primarily a question of WHAT but of HOW—a fact which the opportunists as always have again entirely disregarded. Because of their simultaneous opposition to bourgeois legislation and to the bourgeois government as a whole, as illustrated in their rejection of the budget among other things, the representatives of the Social Democracy in the legislative bodies in seeking to carry out social reforms are free to conduct their fight for bourgeois reforms

on a principled socialist base, on the base of the proletarian class struggle. A Social Democrat, on the other hand, who attempts to carry out the same social reforms as a member of the government—that is, at the same time supporting the bourgeois state as such—thereby transforms his socialism to bourgeois democracy or to bourgeois labor politics at best. Hence, while the participation of the Social Democracy in the representative bodies strengthens the class struggle, its participation in the government can result only in introducing corruption and confusion into the ranks of the Social Democracy."

This criticism applies not only to the present policy of the S.P. of France but also to the C.P. whose spokesmen, Duclos and Thorez, have stated that under certain conditions they would approve the budget and vote military credits in the Blum cabinet.

Rosa Luxemburg wrote the following on the practical results of Jaures' policy (*The Socialist Crisis in France, 1900-1901*):

"As soon as there is a danger that the cabinet might be overthrown, principles are thrown to the winds; it is sufficient for the government at any moment to ask for a vote of confidence in order to beat Jaures and his friends into submission. In the past it was a question of saving the republic thru the defense of the government, today, it is a question of saving the government thru the abandonment of the defense of the republic. 'Republican Union' today stands as the rallying center for all republican forces for the preservation of the Waldeck-Millerand cabinet.

"The ministerialism of Millerand reduces . . . the socialist criticisms of his friends in the Chamber of Deputies to idle talk, to academic dissertations on the 'lofty perspectives' of Socialism without exerting any influence on the practical policy of the government. . . ."

"Instead of increasing the influence of the Socialists in the government and in parliament, the tactics of Jaures have made the Socialist Party a helpless tool in the hands of the government and a passive appendage of the radical petty bourgeoisie. Instead of stimulating progressivism in the Chamber, Jaures' policy has eliminated the only driving force—the opposition of the Socialists—which might have prevailed upon parliament and the government to pursue a more aggressive, a more militant policy. . . ."

"The tactics of Jaures are . . . built on a foundation of sand. The resurrection of petty bourgeois democracy which end Millerand's participation in the government was to serve and for the sake of which the socialist opposition in the Chamber was sacrificed, has turned out to be a phantom. On the contrary, Jaures, in chaining the socialist proletariat to the corpse of petty bourgeois radicalism, has paralyzed the only living force which was capable of defending the republic and democracy in France."

To pledge the working class parties to a coalition government with the bourgeoisie can only result in a situation where these parties, including the Communist Party, if it continues to pursue a People's Front policy, become the tail-end of the left bourgeois parties and are unable to make an ef-

fective defense of the democratic rights of the working masses against fascism.

In the place of Jaurès' tactics, Rosa Luxemburg proposed revolutionary tactics. To quote from "The Socialist Crisis":

"The difference between socialist policy and bourgeois policy consists in the fact that the Socialists as opponents of the existing order as such are necessarily obliged to remain in opposition in the bourgeois parliament. . . . Fundamental opposition is generally speaking the only effective weapon for a minority party, and particularly for the Socialist Party, to gain practical results. It is by no means an obstacle to practical, concrete victories in the field of progressive, immediate reforms."

Rosa Luxemburg also pointed out the decisive significance of the extra-parliamentary struggle:

"In the direct opposition to the erroneous opinion of Jaurès, I believe that the basis of parliamentarism is more fully assured (against attacks of reactionary forces, today meaning fascism—Editor) if our tactics take into account not only parliamentary acts but also the direct action of the proletarian masses."

Thirty years have passed since these discussions on ministerialism. The exponents of the People's Front policy in offering the old tactics of Jaurès which have been refuted by history point to recent changes in the political situation. What are these new events which lead the C.P. to believe that the teachings of Marxism-Leninism are no longer valid? These factors are the decline of capitalism and the appearance of fascism which in itself is but a product of capitalist decline. Precisely under these conditions of capitalist decay, is it doubly false to sacrifice the interests of the proletarian class struggle to an alliance with the democratic bourgeoisie which, as part of the capitalist class, participates in its development as a class and becomes evermore reactionary as the decline of capitalist economy progresses.

The New Soviet Constitution

An Editorial

THE new constitution of the Soviet Union is living proof that the proletarian dictatorship makes for the full development of the rights of the toiling masses. Even Socialists and bourgeois liberals who, as a rule, attempt to class the dictatorship of the proletariat and the fascist dictatorship of capital as one and the same thing are forced to recognize the democratic nature of the soviet state. These "well-meaning" discussions of the new soviet constitution by socialists and liberals, however, contain a number of misconceptions. We think it necessary to discuss these particularly because the official press of the C.I. is content to record the praise

showered on the Soviet state by reformist and liberal organs without criticizing the distortions that invariably accompany such praise.

We must bear in mind first of all that it is by no means true that the workers of the Soviet Union are acquiring democratic rights *only now*; that, in other words, they had been deprived of all democratic rights hitherto. The proletarian dictatorship has always stood for proletarian democracy—democracy for the workers in a more complete sense than the most ideal bourgeois regime can possibly offer. The Soviet Union has always been the state of the workers and peasants.

The change in essence is as follows: now that the exploiting class has been eliminated, former members of the bourgeoisie have been granted full political rights which had been withheld from them as long as their capitalist interests had not been completely eliminated and as long as they still represented a menace to socialist construction.

Furthermore, now the great mass of peasants have been transformed from petty producers into co-workers of collectivized farm enterprises, thus eliminating the class distinction between workers and peasants. Hence, the political privileges of workers which were withheld from the peasants in order to guard the proletarian character of the soviet state and to paralyze the political vacillations of this class arising from its petty bourgeois character, have been extended to include the peasantry. Indeed, the toiling peasants (not the kulaks) of the Soviet Union have had *more* privileges than those of any bourgeois state. The liquidation of classes has now eliminated any difference in the political rights of the workers and peasants and the new constitution no longer speaks of "soviets of workers and peasants," but only of the "soviets of the toilers."

One hears quite often that the Soviet Union is once more adopting forms of bourgeois democracy and for this reason it is not necessary for the workers of other countries to fight for the proletarian dictatorship; they ought rather to adhere to the principles of bourgeois democracy, once again confirmed by the events in the Soviet Union. This view is utterly false. To regard the new soviet constitution as a return to bourgeois democracy on the basis of *formal* similarities is just as incorrect as the well-known attempts to confuse the fascist and proletarian dictatorships on the basis of superficial features. The soviet state is by no means a "parliamentary" state. The newly created "Supreme Council" of the Soviet Union which is elected on the basis of universal suffrage is no more a parliament in the bourgeois sense than the Paris Commune which was also elected on the basis of universal suffrage.

In contrast to bourgeois parliamentarism which is based on the separation of powers, the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union and all other (local) soviets combine the legislative and executive branches of government into one body in the same manner as did the Paris Commune and as has been the case in the Soviet Union from the very first days. The Council of People's Commissars and the executive committees of the local soviets are merely administrative organs of the soviet bodies; not only are they controlled by them but their work necessitates constant collaboration. Thus the Council of People's Commissars works with the presidium of the "Supreme Council" of the Soviet Union.

The new soviet constitution is not concerned with creating "debating

societies" but efficient working bodies. The "Supreme Council" is elected by direct suffrage. The industrial workers no longer vote in their shops because election districts have been mapped out on a geographic basis. At one time elections were held in the factories because it was a matter of emphasizing the leading class role of the proletariat in the Soviet state—of stressing in a dramatic fashion the political influence of the industrial workers. Today this is no longer necessary because *all* class distinctions between industrial workers and the rest of the population have disappeared.

The new soviet constitution, therefore, does not represent a return to bourgeois democracy. It signifies a *higher level of the proletarian dictatorship* made possible thru the victory of socialist production and the abolition of classes.

These achievements of the Soviet Union cannot be reached by the workers in other countries on the basis of bourgeois democracy. International labor must realize that if it seizes power it will not be able at once to reach as high a stage of workers' democracy as we have today in the Soviet Union; that, as a matter of fact, as in Russia, it will first have to smash the resistance of the exploiting classes and must liquidate the latter before one can even dream of granting equal political rights to all members of the nation, and of limiting the employment of revolutionary force thru constitutional guarantees.

As a result of its new constitution, the soviet state is nearing its goal of abolishing the state altogether. Marx's words on the Paris Commune to the effect that the latter did not represent a state in the true sense of the word, are even more applicable to the soviet state at present. Inasmuch as classes in the Soviet Union have been abolished, the soviet state is not the governing body of one class over another; its struggle against the capitalist class is mainly a defensive struggle against the imperialist nations and a struggle against still existing capitalist traditions and customs among the toiling masses of the Soviet Union. The struggle of the workers of the Soviet Union now that the *material* vestiges of capitalism have been removed is a struggle against the *ideological* remnants of the capitalist system. Hence, it is only a *partial* class struggle, a political struggle. For this reason, the new constitution continues to stress the important role of the Communist Party, not permitting the existence of any other political party, for the latter would be but a representative of the capitalist tradition.

Having founded the material bases of socialism, the Soviet Union is now engaged in the education of the new socialist individual. The new soviet constitution emphasizes the rights and duties of the individual in a socialist society, thus proving that only socialism can assure the individual true freedom.

Perspectives for Spanish Revolution

By JOAQUIN MAURIN

The author of the article printed below is the widely known Spanish Communist leader Joaquin Maurin, recently captured and executed by General Mola's butchers, on the Aragon front.

Maurin was expelled from the Communist International during the ultra-left drive in 1930 and immediately set about building his organization of opposition communists. He secured a large measure of success in Catalonia where he was very well known and greatly respected. Towards the end of 1935 Maurin's organization merged with the group led by the capable and internationally known Andres Nin who had completely broken with Trotsky and Trotskyism. Thus was born the Workers Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.) which has established for itself a sterling reputation in the fighting on the Aragon front and in the Asturias.

Joaquin Maurin's position, as also the present position of the P.O.U.M. in the bitter struggle against fascism in Spain is, in the main, identical with the position of the International Communist Opposition. In recognition of this agreement many contingents of German Communist Oppositionists offered their services and were welcomed into the fighting ranks of the P.O.U.M.

Maurin took an active part in the revolution of October 1934 and after the final defeat of the Asturian miners he was forced to go into hiding because the government had placed a price on his head. It was during this period that he wrote a series of five articles on the October revolt, under the pseudonym of Juan Antonio, especially for the Workers Age. A perusal of these articles* will indicate what a keen political observer Maurin was.

The present article was first published in May 1936 in the Nueva Era, as a refutation of the contention of the Communist and Socialist Parties that the Spanish Revolution must not be permitted to go beyond the bourgeois-democratic stage. We submit it here in slightly abbreviated form, due to space limitations. Written fully two months before the fascist revolt, Maurin nevertheless foresees with great clarity the course which events would take. His criticism of the People's Front, the accuracy with which he foresees the bid of the fascists for power and the ultimate role of the Azana Republicans, marks him as a leader of great ability.

There is little doubt that in the present confusion in the working class movement in Spain, the P.O.U.M. stands out as the only Marxist organization. The execution of Maurin was a tremendous loss to the P.O.U.M. and the Spanish proletariat and to the revolutionary movement thruout the world.—Editor.

THE STALINIST communists, in practice ex-communists, affirm that our revolution is bourgeois-democratic in nature. This has extraordinarily grave political consequences. It signifies placing the proletariat in a secondary place, fulfilling the role of running footman of the bourgeoisie.

* See *Workers Age* of Feb. 9, 16 and 23, and March 2 and 9, 1935.

The socialists continue navigating in the midst of a sea of confusion and of a complete lack of theoretical outlook. Fundamentally, they also believe—and act accordingly—that the revolution is bourgeois-democratic.

This theoretical position, and the consequent tactics of the Communist and Socialist Parties, are the principal cause for the slowness of the revolutionary process.

Opposed to the socialists and Stalinists there is a Marxist sector, ours, which begins with the supposition that we are in the presence, not of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but of a socialist-democratic revolution, or to be more exact, a socialist revolution.

* * *

The bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class only when, after its birth in the course of the Middle Ages and especially during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, it fought against feudalism and the church.

The bourgeoisie, after a series of centennial combats which at times acquired an epic splendor—the English and French revolutions—conquered political power in a great number of countries. The bourgeoisie then organized an economic system: capitalism. Now then, in the same manner as from the loins of ancient feudalism a new social class was born—the bourgeoisie—whose mission it was to destroy feudalism, so also from the loins of capitalism arose the proletariat, whose historic mission it was to be the heir, continuer and destroyer, at the same time, of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, a revolutionary class in relation to feudalism, has been transformed into a conservative and reactionary class with respect to the proletariat. This transformation of the bourgeoisie begins to manifest itself on the one hand, as feudalism is destroyed, and, on the other hand, as the working class develops in the heat of the factory system and large industry. This change is observed experimentally in 1848, attaining in 1871, in the French Commune, gigantic proportions. This evolution of the bourgeoisie in a retrograde sense, in opposition to the growth and revolutionary development of the proletariat, is accentuated more and more during the 20th century, the epoch of imperialism.

The first revolution in the 20th century is that of Russia, in 1905. Even in Russia where it had to liquidate feudalism, it was palpably demonstrated that the bourgeoisie was no longer a revolutionary force, that the only truly progressive class was the proletariat. Only the proletariat could carry the revolution forward. The lack of a true revolutionary party capable of fulfilling the functions of an axis of the proletariat and finding allies, principally the peasantry, determined the failure of the revolution. The bourgeoisie, after some vacillations, ended up by allying itself with feudal Czarism against the working class.

In 1917 the problem is posed again, as in 1905. But the workers' movement has *before it* the experience of twelve years ago. While reformist socialism, menshevism, pretends that the Russian revolution is a bourgeois one, revolutionary Marxism believes that the proletariat must conquer political power to fulfill the bourgeois revolution, which the bourgeoisie is incapable of doing, and that the proletariat must initiate the socialist revolution.

It is surely unnecessary to prove now that the bolshevik position was correct, as opposed to the menshevik position. The astonishing thing is that

they who call themselves continuers of bolshevism, support the positions which the Dars, the Plekhanovs, the Tseretellis and the Kérenskys defended, when a situation similar to that of Russia of 1917, now develops in Spain.

The Russian revolution, or better said, the three Russian revolutions, the one of 1905 and the two of 1917, are for the proletarian revolution what the great French revolution, at the end of the 18th century, was for bourgeois revolutions: an exemplary standard.

In Italy, in Germany, in Austria, social-democracy insisted upon halting the revolution at the bourgeois-democratic stage. It wished to remain on the Russian basis of 1905 without arriving at the October of 1917. The defeat could not have been more overwhelming. The workers of the above mentioned countries and the international proletariat itself suffer now the consequences of the mistakes of reformist socialism, which hinders the triumph of the socialist revolution.

* * *

When the Communist International, in 1935 and 1936, considered as liquidated all perspectives of the world socialist revolution and set up the slogan of "democracy or fascism" we jumped, it seems, a hundred years backward. What is now fascism was then feudal reaction.

To the theorists of the Communist International—many of them old mensheviks—nothing has occurred in the world in the last thirty years. They show, in the first place, a complete and total lack of comprehension of the nature of fascism. The fact that they oppose two abstract terms "democracy" and "fascism" proves their departure from Marxism.

When the bourgeoisie conquered power by an intransigent struggle against feudalism, it became dictatorial. The bourgeois dictatorship then was progressive. Cromwell and Robespierre symbolize this historic state.

As the proletariat grows, it formulates demands. It wishes to have a place in the sun. It asks for bread and organizes its trade unions to make felt its requests; it wants liberty and forms its political parties to wrest it from a hostile capitalist state.

The struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie, in an epoch in which the proletariat has not yet attained its majority, crystallizes and assumes democratic forms. The bourgeoisie, holding on to the sources of political and economic power, nevertheless is obliged to make concessions in both spheres since it can no longer ignore the working class.

The true source of democracy is not the bourgeoisie, but the working class. Only that social class which is the majority of the people can be a consistent defender of democracy to its ultimate consequences. After defeating feudalism, the bourgeoisie has always placed obstacles in the path of democratic conquests. The struggle for universal suffrage, for the right to organize, for freedom of assembly, for free speech, is the barometer which measured the great pressure of the workers' movement. This struggle became effective thru the liberal parties of the bourgeoisie which had an eye on the conquest of political power.

* * *

But we have now entered the decadent phase of capitalism. The bourgeoisie understands that the proletariat has reached its maturity and is preparing to replace it. A democratic situation, naturally, favors the working class movement in preparing itself to engage in the final battle. In the

face of this situation, the bourgeoisie, which has been reluctantly democratic when democracy was an aid to the working class, begins the speedy liquidation of every democratic vestige. It is the evolution to fascism.

Fascism is a new form of domination by the bourgeoisie which consists in handing over political power to a handful of "condottieri" and unscrupulous, regimented adventurers who exercise this power despotically by destroying all workers' organizations and all the democratic rights gained by the working class. In this way the bourgeoisie, whose capacity for political rule has become exhausted, feels itself secure in the economic sphere and makes efforts to maintain with difficulty a social regime which is in opposition to the interests of the majority of the population, in contradiction to the necessities of society.

How is it possible, then, to pose the question of democracy or fascism? Democracy, as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, corresponds to an outmoded period. The bourgeoisie no longer personifies democracy, but dictatorship of a fascist or semi-fascist type. Democracy today is linked up with the working class movement, with the triumph of the proletariat. To pose the problem of democracy means to bury the question of the seizure of power by the working class.

To endeavor to confine the historic question within the limits of "democracy or fascism" is an unpardonable crime, since it will not be the bourgeoisie which will bite on the hook. Such a conception will hinder the revolutionary movement of the working class precisely when the circumstances are most favorable for it, thus giving time to the counter-revolution to mobilize itself.

In a word, there would be repeated what the mensheviks desired in Russia in 1917 and what triumphed in Italy, Germany and Austria—that is, an effort to maintain the revolution within the framework of capitalism while the bourgeoisie evolves by forced marches to fascism.

* * *

The historic phase of the bourgeois revolution corresponds to the 18th and 19th centuries. In that epoch the Spanish bourgeoisie did not know how to effect its own revolution. And it did not do it because the power of feudalism, for a number of reasons which we do not have to investigate now, was so overwhelming and the strength of the bourgeoisie so relatively weak that the victory of the bourgeois revolution was not possible as in other countries. The feudal remnants grouped themselves around the monarchy. The struggle against the monarchy thus marked the first step of the liberating revolution.

The bourgeoisie made possible the restoration of the monarchy in 1874 and was not capable of overthrowing it later. This was a mission which devolved upon the working class. As the working class movement has been developing, acquiring class consciousness during the 20th century, the problem of the revolution has kept on becoming ever more clear.

The monarchy, resting upon the whole semi-feudal bourgeois system, was submerged on April 14, 1931, not merely on account of some election results but because of a wide mobilization and intense pressure of the working masses. When the monarchy fell, there was also submerged, in part, the existing capitalist regime in Spain. April 14 signified, historically, the beginning of the march to the socialist revolution.

Nevertheless, social-democracy made unspeakable efforts to aid the bourgeoisie to carry out a "decorous" bourgeois revolution. But all that resulted in failure, because it is not possible, not even with proletarian blood-infusions, to give revolutionary vigor to a social class, the bourgeoisie, which has entered the stage of decadence. The fundamental problems of the democratic revolution remained unsolved.

What is known in our recent history as the "first biennial" was no more, to put it concisely, than the overwhelming demonstration that it is impossible for the bourgeoisie to complete the bourgeois revolution, and the simultaneous proof that the Social Democrats have no solution of the problem of continuity between the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution.

On November 19, 1933, the representatives of the class forces defeated on April 14, 1931, triumphed at the polls. In two and a half years, the reactionary forces, hitherto grouped around the monarchy, had succeeded in regaining its strength, giving battle and winning it decisively. The proof could not have been more convincing. The bourgeois-democratic revolution had been a monstrous swindle. The bourgeoisie was travelling, by forced marches, toward a fascist position. It was following the road taken by other countries.

* * *

The Spanish proletariat, schooled by what had occurred in Germany and Austria, prepared to give battle to budding fascism before the latter became well organized and in a position to defeat the working class. There occurred the heroic and historic events of October 1934, culminating in the glorious insurrection of the Asturias.

The October movement was not republican in nature, that is, not a bourgeois democratic movement. It was eminently socialist in character. October signified a violent reaction against the stupid reform policy of 1931-1933 and an audacious step in the direction of socialist revolution.

It is the proletariat that fought in October, and it struggled against the reactionary bourgeoisie personified by the Republic. When the great explosion of October broke out, the petty bourgeois left republicans, struck with fear, made a gesture of revolt only to surrender later, bag and baggage, thus decapitating the movement.

October was defeated, but not conquered. The working class of the entire country became alert and far from feeling crushed, worked underground, continuing what October began.

October was the prologue to the second, the socialist revolution. The working class movement, after having written that preface with its own blood is now prepared to pass to new actions.

In the elections of February 16th, the counter-revolution was defeated. The battle of February 16 is the continuation, in a legal form, of October 1934. The struggle has as its focal point the question of October 1934. The main slogans are those of amnesty and the rehiring of the discharged workers. October triumphed, that is to say, the workers' movement triumphed, the idea of socialist revolution triumphed!

Nevertheless, thru one of those frequent paradoxes of history, that force which externally occupies first place, that force which appears as the chief gainer, is the petty bourgeoisie, the republican movement. And it is

the republicans who took power, basing themselves, to be sure, on the two working class parties—the socialist and communist.

Once more, Spanish politics seems distorted, manifesting a contradiction between what is and what ought to be. The overwhelming majority of the country is socialist. The urban workers, like the peasants, expect nothing from the pseudo-democratic republic. Their hopes go further, toward perspectives of a new social structure.

But power is enjoyed by fictitious parties which represent no more than an error. Neither Azana, nor Martinez Barrio, nor Companys have any real force behind them. The petty bourgeoisie has never had great specific gravity in Spain. And the upper bourgeoisie, does not support Azana, Companys and Martinez Barrio, but places itself openly on the side of the fascist counter-revolution. That republican parties can hold power is due to, is an index of the lack of will of the workers' parties—socialist and communist—to set the working class on the path leading to the violent seizure of power.

There is being repeated here something analogous to what happened in Italy in 1919 and 1920. "*The country was socialist*," said an observer, "*but socialism did not know what to do with the country.*" In effect, Spain, the entire country, desires a socialist revolution, but those who should be the most decisive leaders stubbornly adhere to the static attitude of the Popular Front. In other words, they insist that the revolution do not go beyond the limits set for it by the bourgeoisie.

The surprising and welcome development of the moment is that the masses are ahead of their leaders and their parties. The counter-offensive which took place in the entire country up to September 1934 was an intuitive movement of the masses. October was likewise an action of the masses, without any coordinating central leadership. The battle of February 16, 1936 represents another triumph of the masses. Amnesty, wrested immediately by pressure from below, is still another triumph. The general strike of April 17, declared in Madrid by mass pressure, in opposition to the leadership of the organizations, has been the last example, and not the least important.

The masses have done well, remarkably well. But a Marxist cannot believe in a constant, spontaneous capacity of the masses. The masses absolutely need a directing revolutionary party endowed with a correct Marxist policy.

Azana, as president of the government, supported by socialists and communists, proposes to stabilize the situation by consolidating the democratic republic. Is it possible that Azana and those who support him will have more persuasive force, more dominating and convincing power than German and Austrian social-democracy? Will they, perhaps, obtain in Spain what they have not been able to secure in any other place? Merely to formulate the question shows the absurdity of such a supposition.

Azana has two roads before him: either become the spearhead of bourgeois opposition to the working class movement, or be crushed between two stones: that of the bourgeoisie, on the one side, and the workers' movement on the other. The first possibility is not unlikely, although the second is the more probable.

The offensive of the bourgeoisie had already begun. It is being carried

out by all means: by unlawful acts, terrorism, demonstrations, military and fascist conspiracies, press campaigns in spite of the censorship, violent opposition in parliament, flight of capital, withdrawal of current accounts, stock exchange panic, closing of factories, conscious sabotage, disobedience of certain state laws, international press and financial campaigns, etc.

The economic situation is very grave. Within a short time, if affairs continue with the same rhythm, a financial collapse will occur similar to the ones which took place in France in 1926, in Spain in 1930 and in England in 1931. Then it is possible that the cry will be raised "truce and sacred union to save Spain," which would be nothing but the salvation of the Spanish bourgeoisie.

Azana, in Parliament, in his first speech, said that he would carry out the program of the Popular Front, "without removing or adding a period or a comma." This affirmation is quite significant if one takes into account the fact that the Popular Front was a compromise of an electoral character, the workers' parties being obliged to make a series of concessions and to present only minimum demands in order to make the republican-worker coalition possible, *this, they considered necessary given the state of affairs existing at the beginning of 1936*. Azana does not wish to exceed the minimum demands of the workers. Will that be possible? Is it to be expected that the pressure of the masses will not break the narrow limits of Popular Front demands?

What transpired in Madrid in the middle of April is highly symptomatic and points to what may happen.

On April 14, the fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the republic was celebrated. There took place a series of unlawful acts and provocations of a fascist character. On the 16th a fascist military demonstration occurred. The situation was very serious. The working class movement understood the seriousness of the situation, contrasting the weakness of the government with the insolence of the counter-revolutionaries. The situation was favorable for a general strike to arrest the fascist advance and to oblige the government to take radical measures. But the parties and organizations which form part of the Popular Front yielded to the good promises of Mr. Azana and recommended "calm and vigilance." But the working class movement of Madrid, with a very correct understanding of the importance of the moment, ignored its leaders, allied in the Popular Front, and went out in general strike. Fortunately, the masses go further than the Popular Front.

The Popular Front agreement says among other things that the Agrarian Reform must be carried out, that the problem of unemployment must be solved. Let us limit ourselves solely to these two aspects. Let us suppose that there really occurs that of which the Ministry of Agriculture frequently speaks. A bit of land will be given to peasants of certain Spanish provinces. But will bare land be able to satisfy these hungry peasants? They will need money to buy farm implements, seed, fertilizer, cattle. Where will they secure the necessary money? Azana said in Parliament, "We will give them money." What cheap optimism! In order to create for the peasants economic possibilities there is no other way than to socialize the Bank. Oh! But Republicans of the Popular Front neither wish to speak nor hear of this.

Something similar occurs with the unemployment problem. "It is not a question of relief, but of providing work," says Azana. But how to widen the possibilities for work when our economy is in chronic crisis and each day factories, mines and enterprises shut down? *To take our economy out of its depression* there is no other solution than to place the Bank at the service of the general welfare.

So, no matter which way we turn, we arrive at the inevitable conclusion that in order to get out of the present impasse there is no other visible perspective than to begin *the realization of the socialist revolution*. But since the republicans, the liberal bourgeoisie, cannot leap over their shadow, the failure of their program is as inevitable as during the first period of their rule—1931-1933.

* * *

If the Spanish proletariat had a great Marxist revolutionary party, the seizure of power by the working class would probably have been accomplished already. It has been demonstrated and it will be demonstrated again that it is impossible to confine the revolution within the limits of the bourgeois democratic revolution. History, the development of the working class, the political consciousness of the proletariat, the incapacity and contradictions of the bourgeoisie itself, the very collective needs—all lead to the final conclusion, to the socialist revolution.

The seizure of power by the working class will carry within itself the realization of the democratic revolution which the bourgeoisie cannot effect—the liberation of the land, of the nationalities, destruction of the church, economic emancipation of women, improvement of the material and spiritual position of the workers—and simultaneously will initiate the socialist revolution, socializing the land, transportation, the mines, large industry and the Bank.

Our revolution is democratic and socialist at the same time, since the triumphant proletariat has to complete a good part of the revolution which the bourgeoisie should have accomplished, and, simultaneously, has to begin the socialist revolution. The importance which the seizure of power by the workers in our country will have for the world is incalculable. It will inaugurate a period of great revolutionary uprisings, a period of destruction of fascist regimes, a period of overwhelming pressure by the enslaved people in search of their freedom.

Our country, favored by history, can, with one leap, place itself at the head of a great movement of incalculable significance. A series of circumstances make the Spanish working class today the center of hope of the world proletariat. To be sure, our workers' movement has a number of pitfalls to avoid and subjective difficulties to conquer in order to bring its mission to a happy conclusion.

A Letter to the POU

The following letter, dated August 18, was sent by the International Communist Opposition to the Workers Party of Marxist Unity in Spain. The problems considered in this document are of great significance in the course of the task of transforming the present struggle in Spain against fascism, into a struggle for proletarian power.

The document, addressed to Comrade Andres Nin, expresses grave concern for Comrade Joaquin Maurin from whom nothing had been heard after his capture by the fascists. Since the writing of this letter it has become known that Comrade Maurin was executed.—Editor.

* * *

WE ARE glad to learn that you received our last letter. We are, however, very much worried over the fate of Comrade Maurin and earnestly hope that our fears are ill-founded.

Comrades, permit us to place before you several proposals which we urge you to adopt and realize in immediate action since they will be of decisive influence in the struggle in which you are now engaged. Our proposals are animated by the desire to have the Spanish working class adopt a policy of routing completely the forces of the enemy in the shortest possible time and of strengthening its own forces.

We address our proposals to you because yours is the only force that has adhered to the principles of communism and has developed revolutionary initiative. The official C.P. is paralyzed because of its illusion that the working class must not venture at present beyond the limits of a bourgeois democratic revolution and is content to leave political leadership in the hands of the Left Republicans and the right-wing Social Democrats. Actually, this means that the bourgeois revolution itself will not be fought to a successful conclusion, to say nothing of promoting the tendencies toward a socialist or proletarian revolution.

Our proposals are not products of pure fantasy; they are based on the fundamental class relations obtaining in Spain; they are measures that must be put into effect in order to assure a quick and complete victory. At the same time, we are quite aware of the fact that the specific form of their propagation and execution can be determined only by those engaged in the actual struggle in Spain. In fact, our proposals are based on slogans which you yourselves have already issued. May we repeat that we have the greatest respect for the revolutionary initiative which your Party has displayed on all fields.

The following are our proposals:

1. SPANISH MOROCCO

We urge that the Madrid government in an effort to destroy the Moroccan base of the Militarists immediately issue a proclamation com-

pletely renouncing its claim to Morocco as guaranteed by international treaty; giving the people of Spanish Morocco the right of self-determination and offering them an alliance of friendship.

The objection may be raised that the relationship of Spain to Spanish Morocco is one determined by international treaty and that, therefore, the Spanish government cannot make a change without inviting international complications. In order to meet this objection the Madrid government need only declare that it will not interfere with the rest of Morocco and that it will continue to respect the international treaties in question. Spain itself may at any moment renounce its rights to Spanish Morocco and such an act is most desirable in order to destroy the base of the Militarists there. A decree giving the population of Spanish Morocco the right to determine its national affiliation would have the effect of dynamiting the Moroccan stronghold of the fascists.

We know, of course, that the Giral government will oppose such a move. However, it is certain that if the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unity) raises this question first in the ranks of the working class of Catalonia and then in Spain, no working class organization will dare oppose this proposal and the Madrid government could not long withstand adequate pressure.

It was a grave error on the part of the workers parties to postpone the question of the emancipation of Morocco. It would have been impossible for the fascists to make Morocco their base, had the question been dealt with. However, now that the fascists are rooted in Morocco, it is imperative that Madrid proclaim its renunciation of colonial rule over Spanish Morocco and that the natives of Morocco and those fighting on Spanish soil on the side of the fascists become acquainted with the attitude of the Madrid government.

2. THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

We have learned from various sources that in territory where the People's Front government holds sway, farm laborers and peasants have actually occupied and divided large estates, the owners of which fled the country, and that the government has legalized these actions provisionally. This is not sufficient. The government must issue a *general decree* valid for all of Spain permitting farm laborers and peasants to take over the land either individually or collectively and assuring them *permanent possession*. Those farm laborers and peasants who have already taken over some land have no guaranty whatsoever as to how long they may keep the land. For all they know it may be a provisional war measure which the government will try to nullify after the civil war.

Such a *universal decree*, however, would have its greatest effect in the territory held by the fascists. The government ought to link up this decree with a call to arms to take the land and to defend it. Such a decree would have a remarkable effect on the peasants of Southern Spain and above all on the *sons of peasants* serving in the army and being used by the militarists to crush the working class. Just as the Russian peasant in soldier's uniform left the trenches in 1917 to be present at the distribution of land in his village, so we assume, the Spanish peasant in soldier's uniform would

act. It might perhaps be expedient to require the personal appearance at the distribution of the land and to set a final date.

It will also be necessary to solemnly and expressly assure the peasants that their property will remain unmolested, to offer them government aid if they agree to voluntarily join collectives and to set aside certain sums for this purpose.

We wish to add that the revolutionary liquidation of semi-feudal land estates is still progressing *within the framework of the bourgeois revolution*. It is quite obvious, however, that these measures can be carried out only by the working class in alliance with the peasants. These measures must be realized as quickly and as extensively as possible if the government is to succeed in separating the peasants in soldier's uniform from their officers and in allying them with the working class. Revolutionary warfare demands this solution of the agrarian question.

We are glad to note that the POUM has been agitating for the revolutionary expropriation of large estates for some time. This slogan must be carried into the ranks of the other workers' parties and organizations and the Madrid government must be forced to act along these lines.

3. WORKERS' CONTROL OF PRODUCTION

The slogan for *workers' control of production* must likewise be extended and applied universally. By workers' control of production we mean the *actual management of factories and concerns by the organs of the workers*. It is necessary to unify the local, district and central organs of workers' control. Juridical expropriation of factory owners can be postponed until later but should be resorted to as punitive measures in case of treason or sabotage by employers. Universal application and government legalization of workers' control of production is necessary not only to raise industrial production for war purposes to the highest level but also because of its propaganda effect on the entire working class.

4. MILITARY ORGANIZATION

We have seen reports which indicate that the bourgeoisie is busy establishing special military divisions which may later be used against the armed workers. The working class, on the other hand, is interested in establishing one workers' militia as the dominant military force which absorbs all other military organizations. The lack of trained officers can be remedied by promotion of workers who have military knowledge and training, thru election of officers by the rank and file, thru the formation of soldiers' councils which have the final word on all questions including military problems.

There must be no restoration of the bourgeois class army and all moves in that direction must be suppressed. The workers' militia must be transformed gradually into a Red Army. A true Red Army can be organized only after the victorious civil war; systematic military training of workers and peasants, however, must be the *present step* towards that goal.

5. STATE OF SIEGE

The administration of the state of siege should be in the hands of the workers' and peasants' militia instead of the bourgeois state.

6. SOVIETS

Judging by reports received there exist today in Spain: (a) *Allianzas Obreras* (Workers Alliances) which are not genuine mass organs but cartels of the leaderships of the various workers parties, trade unions, etc.; (b) Committees of Workers Militia; (c) Committees of the People's Front parties.

If the *Allianzas Obreras* are transformed into mass organizations elected on a factory basis, and if the farm laborers and small peasants likewise organize *Allianzas* and ally themselves with the *Allianzas Obreras*, embracing the Militia and the Civil Guard—then we shall have soviets in Spain. Whether they will be called soviets or not is a matter of expediency. The important thing is that they will be genuine mass organs embracing workers, farm laborers, small and middle peasants, the militia and the regular army troops. In individual localities these soviets will take over complete power. Generally speaking, they must be unified on a district and central basis. In all probability such organs would constitute a dual government to the Madrid government and it is their duty to arrogate as much power as they can to themselves.

The question of replacing the present government by a soviet government cannot be raised until genuine soviets have been built from below and unless these soviets have actually assumed the leadership of the toiling classes. The next step in Spain must be the formation of soviets which will be the decisive political organs of power of the working class. A real workers and peasants government can only be a soviet government.

7. THE UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY

The greatest single flaw in the Spanish situation as a whole is the lack of a leading revolutionary Communist Party. The *POUM* has shown the best possibilities of becoming such. We believe that a United Communist Party will be formed with the aid of elements from the official C.P., the S.P. and the Anarcho-Syndicalists.

Hokum on Parade

By JAY LOVESTONE

IT'S A SULTRY Sunday in June. Cleveland is all set to welcome the G.O.P. (Republican Party) convention. The cops look spic and span; their horses' tails seem trim; bunting abounds; loudspeakers everywhere; merchandise signs literally hit you in the face. Three hundred W.P.A. workers—boondogglers to Landon—are putting the finishing touches on the auditorium, are preparing and polishing it at the cost of thousands of dollars to the New Deal Administration, so that the Republican solons can be in a better mood in which to grapple with the grave problems of the hour.

All hotels and near-hotels are actually sold out in anticipation of the big show. I am compelled to try my luck in a veritable joint, let us say, Brawley House by name. A fancy monopoly price is asked for a hole in the wall—telephoneless, water-less and dirt-ful. As if to make up for these crying deficiencies, self-offering unattractive but cheerful "attractions" are at one's disposal in the hastily set up lobby. One has a hunch that to take the "absolutely last vacant room" at Ritz prices means to run the fatal risk of being taken over by these peroxidized would-be partners. A suitable setting for a Republican convention that is to make history, eh? But what the heck, why then call this a holiday?

On all sides, unsought for generosity seems to grip you and get the best of you. Everything but apples is sold on the streets here. At least on the surface, everybody appears to want to be nice to you, the moment your convention badge is spotted. It's business, you know! Especially sweet to you is the Republican Convention Committee, if you are an active newspaper man. A midnight supper with lots of good drinks and as good smokes free—"in the quarters of the Admiralty Club, aboard S.S. Moses Cleveland," awaits you on Monday night. First class club facilities are at your beck and call. Golf? Of course. "Just call MAin 7700 and say 'I want to play golf.'" The Women's Hospitality Committee is on the alert to "request the pleasure of your company at a reception in the Fine Arts Garden." In fact, "the City of Cleveland," thru Mayor Burton and Chief of Police Matowitz, makes you "the city's guest during the 1936 Republican National Convention" with "all courtesies." More woes for the poor pedestrians.

Sad but true, Tuesday approaches. The lucky opening day for all Republican and Democratic national conventions! Well, what are we here for anyway? Delving for an answer into the package given me by the Republican National Committee, I find a neat little card bearing on one side the American flag over the inscription "Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty." Here there was neither enlightenment nor surprise, so I turned to the other side. At once my brow is wrinkled when I find a message from the late Democratic Senator Oscar Underwood of Alabama to the dele-

Gates and newspaper men at the convention of Hoover, Taft, Roraback, Bingham, DuPont, Dawes, Watson, Hilles, Ruth Pratt, Wadsworth, Ogden Mills, David Reed, Colonel Knox, and Vanderbilt. Surely stars must have fallen on Alabama when the Republican Party, classical party of government centralization, goes down there to have the deceased Underwood strike for it the following keynote:

"The men and women of America who desire the preservation of their individual rights under the Constitution of their country and are opposed to the establishment of a system of paternalism in the U. S. must above all else and at all times stand steadfast to the first principles of government, and see to it that their representatives in Congress do not sacrifice principle under any circumstances, no matter how alluring the bait may be.

"We should divorce the Federal Government from any intimate association in the domestic affairs of the people; confine its active function to the national endeavor contemplated in the beginning; as far as possible abolish the numerous boards, commissions and bureaus that are now exercising powers of government . . . In other words, we should abolish the discretions that are now vested in a bureaucratic government and restore in its entire integrity the government of law we inherited from our fathers."

It was against none other than Herbert Hoover himself that Underwood first divested himself of this wisdom in 1928!

Pessimism pervaded the air as chairman Fletcher rapped the gavel at 11:40 to open the Convention. It stayed with the delegates thru the final session on Friday. Prayers were offered aplenty in regular procedure. The Catholic invocation was so partisan and so militantly anti-Roosevelt that it evoked much applause—registering over 60 on the noise meter. This was in marked contrast with the drab and unsolemn silence which greeted the Tuesday morning prayer for freedom from "commercial greed and social irresponsibility." The wooden words of welcome chopped by Mayor Burton fitted into the whole lifeless picture. Not even the noble efforts of the quartette—two Black and two White—could lend any spirit to the conclave. One got a feeling of double distilled dullness as the Convention Call was read. At last the delegates and alternates showed the first sign of life, the first motion in their seats: they responded warmly to the announcement for adjournment.

By the time the first night session got around, the convention leaders were determined to put some life into the proceedings. This was to be the gala night—the keynote address was to be delivered, the war cry of the campaign was to be raised, the delegates were to be inspired with a hope and determination to win—at least inflamed with a spirit of fighting to a finish. But not even the most excited Republican advocate, not even the most incited G.O.P. office-seeker, could draw the slightest spark of hope, the faintest glimmer of enthusiasm from the keynote speech by U. S. Senator Frederick Steiwer, the temporary chairman of the Convention. He belabored his listeners with moth-eaten commonplaces, with time-worn il-literacies, with outright Brisbanalities. The virulence of his personal attacks against F.D.R. was his real achievement. So bad a keynote address had not been heard, so flat a failure had not been seen at national conventions in years. One wondered at the suicidal politics behind the scenes responsible for this flop, in view of the fact that everything was planned to the minutest detail outside of the convention hall.

Here are some of the pearls cast by the Oregonian before the office-hungry hundred-percenters: "The nation deserves a government by *con-science*." Shades of Teapot Dome! "The chief reason for the present unemployment in this country is the blocking of the progress of the *American system by trying out plans and ideas borrowed from the poverty economics of Europe*." "Ours is an economy of profit and loss. It cannot thrive without both. *Law or regulation to guard against the losses inevitable in competition freezes industry and prevents progress*." This was the height of his eloquence in appealing to small business!

Steiwer took a deep bow to Hearst when he fumed against the New Deal for "harboring aliens who are not entitled to remain in America," for "depending on bookworms for practical experience and on bookworms for energy." Forgetting about Hoover's mobilizing tanks and troops against the Veterans, the keynoter of the Republican morgue shed crocodile tears for the "disabled veterans of our wars." He quickly proceeded to tell the world that "above all else is the need for the old fashioned idea of thrift." Mented applause greeted Steiwer when he, accidentally but effectively, declared: "If the Salvation Army had used its good work to build a political organization, as was done by the New Deal Army, it could have claimed the whole world—not merely the 48 states claimed by Farley." No sooner had Steiwer finished: "To Him let our prayers be offered that an aroused America . . . will vindicate the faith of the fathers," when the band struck up the tune of "Three Blind Mice" for the words of a campaign song, "Three Long Years."

Another session. Another invocation. More milling about. The rules of order are adopted speedily as the chair disregards totally the loud No's.

After more prayers for deliverance were performed, Congressman Bertrand H. Snell, veteran lackey of the giant power interests, was selected as permanent chairman. What he said in his address was poorer even than the manner in which he said it. The leader of the Republicans in the House told the unresponsive audience: "Let us here begin our march to sanity and to safety. . . . Come forth from the sepulchre of defeat and the dole. This way lies life, and hope and opportunity. . . . This is not a partisan issue, it is a moral issue. . . . Free competition has been throttled and honest enterprise intimidated. . . . All the great primary driving forces of American life . . . have been sacrificed for the sentimental glamor of the bureaucratic boondoggle. . . . What a fantastic scheme of life we have been living! . . . Against this demoralizing reign of incompetence I hear today America's earnest prayer for deliverance . . . to resist the encroachments of an alien system of capricious personal government. . . . This precious light of American freedom must not fall! This Convention beckons America forward!—forward in the paths of orderly progress under law! . . . We are here—as George Washington said at the Constitutional Convention—to raise a standard to which the brave and patriotic may repair. The event is in the hands of god. . . ."

While Snell was calling on the Constitution, the flag, the Bible, the family, and while he was hailing the G.O.P. as "a political force which personified the deeply-rooted American instinct for law and order," it was becoming clearer and clearer why he so frequently begged for God's help. The delegates appeared to be a lump of frozen assets. They couldn't collect

themselves to any warmth of response. Some of them were busy reading a leaflet issued by John B. Chapple of Wisconsin telling the world: "*Delegates, America is dying under the present trend. Nearer and nearer we approach to the time of collapse. Little by little the spirit of Americans is being broken. . . .*"

Chapple apparently had his fingers on the right heart-strings. That's just how most of the delegates felt—and behaved.

By this time we were well on the way to the big event of the circus. Believe it or not, it was a speech by Hoover! The Party machine was all set for it. The claque were well trained. The solemn atmosphere bordering on the funeral was prepared. Cheering but not cheerful crowds welcomed Hoover at the Union Station in a spirit of duty rather than joy. One ageing California woman in the reception committee said to me: "*Ah, but he's a grand man. He's honest. His life is like a fishbowl. He's got something upstairs, tho he's not a handshaker. I love him.*" It was to be Hoover's triumphal exit from politics. Hence fifteen minutes of applause was prepared for him as he was presented and 32 minutes of ear-splitting, grinder-shaking noise were presented to him as a farewell—as a send-off into political oblivion. It was a synthetic finish—artificial flowers for the dead but unmourning.

Yet the king of all Republican liabilities scored two points in his behalf. He was the first one to get some attention and arouse some interest and response among the delegates—despite his droning delivery, his agonizing monotone. Then, he was the first one at the show to attempt to deal with the issues of the campaign. In doing this Hoover sought to vindicate his past and his policies. The "great engineer" clumsily tried to don the garb of the "greatest moralist." He mumbled about "*principles which came into the universe along with the shooting stars of which worlds are made.*" He blurted: "*No matter what the new platform of the New Deal Party may say, the philosophy of collectivism and that greed for power are in the blood of some part of these men. . . . Less than 20 years ago we accepted those ideals as the air we breathed. We fought a great war for their protection. We took upon ourselves obligations of billions. We buried our sons in foreign soil. But in this score of years we have seen the advance of collectivism and its inevitable tyranny in more than half the civilized world. In this thundering era of world crisis, distracted America stands confused and uncertain.*"

Having buried the ghost of Hoover, all was ready for putting over the platform and pushing thru the candidate. In the lobbies of the auditorium one could hear a highly politically minded youngster yell, "*Get behind your standard bearer. Buy a noise-maker.*" He did a thriving business. Outside, prairie carts drawn by oxen and followed by corn-fed women aroused warm admiration for Landon and his boomers.

About the platform adopted, the less said the better—for the Republican chances in November. Evasion, omission and contradiction wrapped in phrases of the threadbare liberalism of Borah, sum it up. It looks upon all social security as a state problem. It is utterly vague on the constitutional issue. It hypocritically bows to the old Republican position on the tariff. Labor is given the usual promise of freedom from interference with the right to organize "*without interference from any source.*" The "from

any source" phrase is a notorious fraud that has time and again been used to thwart trade unions from organizing labor, particularly in the big plants.

Of course, the Republican Party is against monopolists—in its platform of 1936. The new G.O.P. jimmy-artists went back to the Democratic campaign platform of 1900, written by William Jennings Bryan, to pilfer from its section on "*Trusts and Monopolies*" platitudes, pledges and promises. Thus the Democratic platform of 1900 opens: "*Private monopolies are indefensible and intolerable,*" while Wall Street's Republican platform of 1936 begins: "*A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable.*" Thorns for McKinley, but flowers for Bryan! Times do change—but politicians remain the same. And so it goes down the line, plagiarizing phrase and substance in order to get the votes of the little fellow to help the biggest fellow.

By this time all was ready for selecting publicly the presidential nominee. It was clear to all that once Vandenberg and Knox dropped their idle chatter about deadlocking the convention, Landon would win uncontested.

The nominations ceremony opened with Alabama passing and Arizona yielding to Kansas. This meant John Hamilton putting Landon in nomination. Here the telegram stunt from the "Kansas Coolidge" was pulled. For one thing it put Landon in the light of being a strong character, straightforward in his reservations to his party's platform on the currency and constitutional questions. Then, Hamilton's interrupting his nomination address with the telegram afforded an excuse for an additional demonstration for Landon. It all worked. Even the cynics and the skeptics on the press benches muttered recognition and appreciation.

And as the screaming, shrieking, cheering, and hammering split the air, Hamilton was calmly and happily posed on the platform—all smiles and leisurely puffing at his cigarette—as if giving notice to the world that Kansas is not all Bible belt and that people in Kansas are permitted even to smoke! Hamilton's address was a glorification of ignorance sandwiched in between glorification of Landon and character-assassination of Roosevelt. When Hamilton howled for Landon "*He has never been removed from the common people. . . . He has been simply and kindly one of the common folk,*" a wit next to me was led to remark, "*Then give him ham and eggs.*" But the convention responded with carefully prepared bedlam and balderdash. No sooner had Hamilton begun to laud Landon for his anti-monopoly stand when delegate Henry B. duPont grabbed the Delaware standard to start a parade to demonstrate the transformation of his state from a satrapy of the monopolists to a haven of small pants-pressers and little kosher chicken dealers.

Hamilton set the pace and gave the tone for the delegates sentenced to unburden themselves of seconding speeches. A bore from Massachusetts delivered a high school valedictory for Landon because his own state has valleys while Kansas has prairies—and the twain shall meet. An adonoid-blessed lady delegate from Connecticut had a tough time getting the ears of the men delegates and in despair shrieked: "*I am a lady and you have got to listen to me. . . . We must find men and women unafraid. We must have men. . . . We must have the milk of human kindness. . . . We must have a real leader, a typical man.*" (Too much of it is now consumed by

Democrats—according to this unsatisfied lady.) These were magic words. They brought on another parade with banners proclaiming “*Landon a typical American*,” “*Landon the Coolidge from Kansas*” and “*Off the Rocks with Landon and Knox*”. The last one did not last long, since a wise cracker’s amendment “*On the Rocks with Landon and Knox*” spread like wildfire from the newspaper section to the delegates’ ranks. North Carolina soon hauled down this standard.

A Negro delegate from Mississippi in a splendid voice orated his bit to “*the greatest political conclave on earth*,” invoked the spirit of John Brown, waved the flag, revered the Bible, honored the Constitution, denounced the New Deal with special vehemence because it “*endangered the lives not only of Negroes but of pigs*,” and wound up by nominating “*Landon of John Brown’s state*” in behalf of “*twelve million people*.”

Ruth Hanna concluded the regular seconding speeches with a pledge to battle against monopoly and a plea for Landon as a sworn enemy of the trusts! Shades of Mark Hannal! What hard times and political tides will do even to dead heroes of the Republican Party!

An intimation of who was going to be forced into becoming Landon’s running mate was given to the weary delegates when Knox, making one of a special set of seconding speeches, pompously proclaimed: “*In a time of great national crisis, there is no room for personal ambition. We need a united front. We are in a holy crusade to which I pledge my all*.” The Colonel was obviously playing with hyperboles.

Dickinson of Iowa, also in the select set as an ex-contender, spoke to the point when he hailed Landon by emphasizing: “*The Supreme Court has led the way and the Republican Party must follow*.”

Much noise is being made by superficial observers that the Old Guard is out of the picture and that the Republican Party has gone west. This is plain poppycock. It is still true that the “*Old Guard may die but never surrenders*.” The old interests prevail; momentarily, new and fresh spokesmen are to the fore. This is the need of the times. In 1920 the Big Boys needed a man of normalcy;—Harding filled the bill. Later, Coolidge was manufactured as the symbol of silent thrift, and Hoover was pushed up as the “*great engineer*.” Now Wall Street needs a “*typical man*.” A man who hasn’t the handicap of character or capacity. From the point of view of its interests and strategy, the Street has made the best choice.

And what about Hearst and the Liberty League? Landon’s lieutenant realizes that this lodestar of yesterday has become a lodestone today and that from the point of view of votes the Liberty League is a curse in disguise and in fact. We may leave it to Hamilton not to present Landon in the same picture with Herr Hearst or the Liberty League blackmailers.

The Republicans realize that things today are in a state of flux, confusion and transition. The powers that be in the G.O.P. fear that if the Democrats win again they will consolidate their position so firmly as to be at the helm of affairs for years. We have here a desperate struggle within our ruling class for the dominant position in influencing and guiding the country in this period of transition. Hoover was more than right when he lamented that “*distracted America stands confused and uncertain*.”

The “*typical American*” today is vaguely aware of the fact that his

country is changing. He is bewildered at the complicated conflicting trends. In the eyes of Wall Street, Landon is the safest symbol of this bewilderingment; he is a well-to-do business man in the rural areas and speaks for the upper brackets in the farm country. Even if such a type were not friendly to Big Business, he couldn’t actually be hostile because he’d love to win the approbation and confidence of biggest business. This is the myth from the prairies whom Lower Broadway will try to sell as “*the man from the prairies*,” the horse and buggy candidate running for savior in our highly mechanized socio-economic order. Landon, the typical American? That’s how and why.

II.

At Philadelphia the air was still more effectively charged with demagogic oxygen. It was a Farley Roman holiday—five days of them.

In the gathering of the Donkeys the five horsemen led by “Alcohol” Smith could get nowhere. The letter of the erstwhile hero of the “*Side-walks of New York*” was quickly dumped into the sewers. Somehow the efficient Postmaster General Farley managed to succeed in not even receiving the Smith-Ely epistle. Thanks to his Liberty League speech, the Smith venture was greeted like a cold potato by the delegates.

Here gaiety was supreme and somewhat wild. More than one hundred additional expert bartenders from all over the country were brought in to stir drinks for the satiated donkey obstinately clinging to the well-stocked national trough. The first whiff of the New Deal for Philadelphia came with the city throwing its bars wide open on the normally sacred and drab Sabbath day. It was a real Sunday for once. . . . Five hundred hostesses and two hundred Quaker maids lent a surface touch of peace to the plenty of everything which seemed to be at hand. Towering Texas delegates in tergalion hats strutted about the narrow streets. Congressmen could be gotten for a nickel a dozen. Statesmen and high-ranking diplomats for little more. Senators could be had at the call of the shrillest police sirens I have heard anywhere. A band of 150 pieces was thrown together to rehearse and rehearse and rehearse “*Happy Days Are Here Again*.” Here there were to be seen many more women delegates. And more Negroes—and sprightly attractive Negroes fluttered about without fear of being lynched or attacked by “*pure*” whites from the land of Scottsboro. Here one could hear more freely and more often the mention of the word “*labor*.”

At least half of the delegates hailed from the government payrolls—as officials in one capacity or another. Add to this majority, the Democratic party officials and some would-be government officers and party captains as well as a sprinkling of plain citizens and you have the convention assembled. “Jim,” as they call Farley, knows all of them by their first names. Obviously financial irrigation helps breed fruitful intimacy. Thru ultra-skillful management, Farley could always replace serious snarls with happy-endings. Aided by a whole coterie of celebrities and supernumeraries, Jim could do it with ease, if not always with grace. For this he owes no small measure of thanks to his guests and aides among whom were “Dizzy Dean,” David T. Wilentz, James J. Braddock, “Jatsie,” Dempsey, Tunney, champion hog-callers, ear-splitting, noise-makers, and a parade of more than 9,000

Mummers cavorting in their best display. Everything was in first rate order down to the pettiest detail. It seemed as if even the neighborhood of the convention hall was reborn for the occasion. Taking a short stroll in its direction, delegates would be put into the proper spirit by a huge sign of warm welcome blazing forth. "*Green River Welcomes Delegates!*" Tuesday the convention is formally opened with posing and still more posing. Flashlights go constantly "blink-blink." Farley is taken with Robinson who appears proud of his new red tie. Comes the invocation: "*We turn to Thee for light from on high.*" The powerful searchlights in the top balcony forthwith throw their lights on the pastor as if to answer his prayer. "*Stand up for Will Rogers,*" orders Farley. And now Mayor Wilson of Philadelphia is presented to reel off a talk in the spirit and substance of an experienced rubber-neck auto guide. "*Philadelphia embraces you*" he drones thru the microphone to the hundreds of substantial he-Democrats and ample she-Democrats. And they all like it . . .

Now the former Empire State Boxing Commissioner takes his gloves off. He deals blow after blow to the Republicans whom he charges with preferring platitudes and vague promises to the New Deal. . . . Truly a black crime! Next, the big financial interests themselves are floored by Farley because they have not appreciated and do not appreciate today the fact that they had been rescued by the New Deal and its pilot Roosevelt. The "*dictator*" charge is brushed aside by a repudiation of the "*Socialistic and Communist State*" and an adoration of the "*plain people*". A gesture to Borah is coupled with a taunt to the G.O.P. for not nominating Hoover. A knock-out blow is aimed at the Liberty League in the declaration, "*We have had a People's Government. Our job is to keep it.*" Finally, the climax leading to a mentioning of Roosevelt, and Farley has the entire hall on parade. Demonstrations galore. They are usually shorter and snappier than at the Republican convention. Here is a thirty-minute victory march before the very fight is even started. Senator Pittman has the delegates all smiling as they cheerfully adopt his motion of thanks to Farley for a great address by the "*plain, simple guileless man who never lost and never will lose a fight.*"

Joy is still unconfined as the night session gets under way. A Quaker minister leads in drab soporific prayer. A balloon escapes somebody's drowsy hands and breaks amidst prayer. "*Whoopee,*" yells a merry young lady delegate from Tennessee as the sad pastor moans "*Pour Out Thy Spirit Upon Us.*" The noisemakers are all ready—the first night and not the last as at Cleveland. Governor Earle, who as Ambassador to Austria once hailed Dolhuss as a great and noble soul, is presented. A rousing reception greets him with clock-like precision. The band strikes up, "*Hail, hail, the gang's all here, what the hell do we care.*"

The Keystone State governor delivers one of the most effective ghost-written orations ever uttered thru the microphone. He denounces wage-slavery. He raps hard the twelve long years of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover. He even speaks of the "*capitalistic system*" and warns it to beware of the "*thunder on the left*" thru Lemke! He mimes no words in chiding the Liberty Leaguers for their failure to realize how to save the capitalist system. A wild demonstration led by tipsy delegates from South Carolina and Tennessee punctuates his address as he rather effectively proclaims "*and*

then came Roosevelt". Frenzy seizes the delegates as this dynamic ex-Republican dramatically declares: "*The Democratic Party is the bulwark against Big Business Fascism and is leading a crusade not against the Republican Party but against the subversive interests which have seized the Party of Lincoln.*"

The parade is part of the strategy for 1940. Earle has his eyes on that year. 1936 is all Roosevelt. It's a curious sight—yet an accurate picture of the conglomeration making up the heterogeneous outfit known as the Democratic Party. The Rhode Island delegation, wearing red paper helmets, is strutting about and bearing a sign, "*We Will Keep Growing for the New Deal and Roosevelt—Rhode Island Reds.*" Behind them follow the delegates from the party organizations of Scotsboro, the Arkansas flogging case, lynch law, Jim Crowism—all parading for the left-liberal speech of Earle. The latter obviously aimed to steal the thunder from Lemke whose appearance on the scene has forced the Democratic party to talk more left.

Keynoter Barkley of Kentucky rose to his occasion far better than Steiwer. As the Senator throws himself into an impassioned plea in behalf of the Democratic Party which has "*for more than a hundred years justified liberalism in government,*" a gentleman on a donkey is being led around the hall. The mule gets all the attention as this Southern Senator is lavish with his words for dealing with national problems in national ways, for an "*approximation of justice among all classes.*" The orator works up some fire as he makes a scathing denunciation of the capitalists who are ungrateful "*because, in lifting them out of the water, we pulled their hair.*" Barkley appeared to be bitter as he raved against those who are now kicking against the very government which gave them two and a quarter billion dollars, lent them five billions, raised government bonds from 83 to 104, saved the railroads and banks for them and taught frugality to a million and a half young men in the Civil Conservation Camps.

His first reference to the Supreme Court as not being infallible and his exposure of Landon and Knox who now style themselves as "*Bull Mooers*" despite the fact that Theodore Roosevelt, unlike they, vigorously attacked the Supreme Court, finally gets Barkley the audience away from the donkey. A slashing attack on Hearst and the Liberty League and a feverish plea that "*some day these men and women and children will thank God for Franklin Delano Roosevelt*" finishes Barkley's contribution and sets off another well-staged demonstration. From the press section it appeared that the delegates would get bunions not only on their feet but even on their well-greased palms.

It is interesting that at the Republican Convention Hoover was the only one who dared attempt to state the issue. This was because he was getting out of the picture. All the other figures and figureheads did not dare tackle the issues because they were trying to get into the picture. The Democrats, however, were more ready to touch the issues because they felt themselves securely in the picture. To illustrate. In 1932 the Republicans demanded control of production; today they denounce it because it means some regulation and control of the "*biggest boys.*" This issue is acutest in the agricultural field. It is precisely here where the G.O.P. is given to silence by plowing under all talk about the AAA.

This convention was really an occasion for "first times." A Negro Baptist was called to lead the flock in prayer. His invocation was promptly drowned out by an all-white Glee Club following his sacred words with, as Barkley put it, "that immortal song, Dixie." Except for "Cotton" Elison D. Smith, all the Southerners were appeased by this musical correction. But the Senator from South Carolina walked out in a huff, muttering monosyllables at his party being defiled by Negroes praying for him to his white god! To bring everybody right down to earth, Governor McNutt, who put Indiana on a sort of martial law and sought to call off elections altogether in his state, was given the floor to make some routine motion; and to put everybody in good cheer and harmony. Seymour Weiss of Huey Long's brain-trust fame, was put in the convention limelight; a full-blooded Indian princess was gotten to sing "By the Waters of Minnetanka"; Harry Hirschfeld was rushed up to tell tales; a Southwestern delegate challenged Iowa to a hog-calling contest; some of Major Bowes' talent was brought in to sing, and Edward J. Dowling to think, look, and act funny. However, behind and beneath all this superficial harmony, deep-going social and economic forces were operating for changing alignments and for fatal discord in Democratic ranks in 1940. In fact the highest spots at the convention were those so staged as to indicate preparations for 1940.

Thus sharp struggle in the Minnesota delegation delayed seriously the report of the Credentials Committee. While inside the hall the Arkansas delegates were marching about with a sign bearing the legend, "The New Deal, Never a Step Backward," workers were picketing the convention hall outside with signs announcing protests against flogging of sharecroppers and their organizers in Permanent Chairman Joe Robinson's state of Arkansas. And imagine the Zionchecked delegation from the State of Washington coming to the convention of the Democratic Party with a demand that the Roosevelt platform contain a plank providing for "production for use"! Only Zioncheck was missing, being detained, for various reasons, in another asylum in Washington. As Robinson was being prepared for his speech, the Michigan delegation started a march around the hall. Its leaders proudly carried signs proclaiming "Michigan, Playground of America" and "Michigan Auto Industry Thanks Roosevelt: 1932, General Motors Profits \$100,000; 1935 General Motors Profits \$200,000,000."

Of course, no picture of the convention or of the Democratic Party would be complete or accurate without the parade of Curley's gang. This hoodlum governor of Massachusetts, with an eye toward 1940, organized for himself a triumphal entry into the convention hall. He was led into the gathering by an American Legion band and two-score legionnaires with bayonet-set rifles on their shoulders. This dime-store would-be Fascist Fuehrer announced himself as "a man of destiny." All in all, it is the sheerest idiocy to declare that the Republican Party is the sole gathering basin of America's actual and potential Fascist forces. There are loads of them in the Democratic Party—and not only in its solid South.

Robinson spoke to a listless and constantly shrinking audience as he repeated in poorer and clumsier fashion what others had said before him. He loudly defended the Roosevelt Administration against the charge that

it did not comply with its 1932 platform. It appeared as if Robinson did not have his heart or head in his effort.

Boredom and lassitude were beginning to show their effects on the delegates, as the Credentials Committee was preparing to report. When its report was made it was adopted unanimously; but, of course, no actual vote was taken. The volume of negative noise was terrific. Robinson then became permanent chairman, with the adoption of the report of Committee on Rules and Order. Things looked awfully drab. Someone gave the signal for life, that is for noise. Up went a terrific din and "yips" of cowpunchers and "wa-wa-wa-was" of Indian yellers from Oklahoma. It was clear that cowbells have become very popular in this convention of donkeys. Another march by doddering young Democrats, some booing and hissing and punches for a handful of hired Smith boosters in the left corner of the topmost balcony added some variety and a spice of life to the show. The young Democrats in a jiffy became fighting Democrats. Soon some color was lent to the performance. There were signs of blood as fists flew. Also, the Negro Congressman Mitchell was called to the platform to blast Dawes, and to tell the world how "Roosevelt saved a farm for a poor Negro." This speech led to Senator Smith taking a longer and more furious walk right straight back to his South Carolina bailiwick.

All of this was merely stage setting for the extremely important report on the two-thirds rule. Senator Bennett Champ Clark reported in behalf of the committee a unanimous decision abolishing the century-old rule requiring a two-thirds vote of the convention in the selection of the presidential nominee. This came only after a terrific battle in the committee and only after the Southern opposition was appeased by a promise of reapportionment of delegates to future conventions on the basis of Democratic Party voting strength rather than population. Senator Clark concluded his report "and with this I move the previous question." Robinson forthwith put the question. He declared the unopened debate closed despite a terrific yell of "nay." The permanent chairman was heavy with his iron hand and light with his swift mind in declaring, in the same fashion, the report of the committee as unanimously adopted. Here was a juggernaut and not a steamroller at work.

Senator Wagner then mounted the rostrum to report for the Committee on Resolutions. He presented a platform with plenty of slippery plants of adequate width and sufficient length. The expected straddle on the currency question was there. No better treatment was accorded to the constitutional issues, though it challenges the theory that States are capable of handling the social and agricultural problems. The document as a whole was so worded as to make not its contents but its interpretation rather decisive in the campaign. The platform struck a new note in American big party politics by declaring that the Democratic Party is "dedicated to a government of liberal American principles" and "determined to oppose equally the despotism of Communism and the menace of concealed Fascism."

According to Wagner and his platform we are living in a Roosevelt paradise. The worker has been returned to the road of freedom and prosperity. So has the business man. And of course our liberties are to be guarded. All of this was leading up to the nomination of Roosevelt.

It was now time to nominate Roosevelt. Mr. Mack of New York

performed this chore by hailing Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a Sir Galahad! Alabama's Governor made the first of 58 seconding speeches. This great "liberal" joyfully told the world that Roosevelt "gave us the greatest bill of human rights in our history." A Democratic miss from Arizona followed with a proclamation that Roosevelt is "democracy's Good Samaritan." McDoo, now on the shady side of seventy, who had been busy with the younger female set of the Convention throughout the sessions, announced himself as coming from "the sun-kissed state with native kissed women." The Senile Senator from California was followed by a lady Democrat who seconded Roosevelt's nomination because "he has saved the American home and family. *We wish to dedicate our tomorrows to you . . .*" She knelt before Roosevelt as the Democrat's leader—"their Saviour." Governor Alva Adams of Colorado seconded the nomination by telling the frog and turtle fable and by saying, "Roosevelt is our Moses."

Then the Convention was introduced to Attorney General Cummings, "father of the G-men." This snooping father spoke of "the dawning future aglow with promise" and of Roosevelt "having carried the government, the constitution and the people to safety." He was followed by a gentleman from Florida who announced himself as "coming from the land of flowers and oranges" and pledged his support of Roosevelt because he had a "heart of varnished gold" and was "the Christ of the Mount." The second from Georgia nonchalantly told the convention that under Roosevelt's leadership "the Democratic Party has shut the door to Fascism, to Communism, to 'lazyfairs' and has given us the Sermon on the Mount." Delegate Boyle of Nevada called Roosevelt "the flower of the desert" who "went out and dragged in prosperity and placed it in our laps." For Boyle, Roosevelt "made our deserts bloom." New Mexico's contribution was to the effect that Roosevelt was "without a peer in the public service." North Carolina hailed Roosevelt as the "ideal of their heart and political redeemer, the restorer of the national faith." New York's Lehman was greeted with a demonstration stored up weeks in advance. Scarcely a delegate listened to him as he made a sober and important speech.

West Virginia's poetic upstart was for Roosevelt because he was "like a spring of ice water to burning lips" and because his work could be compared "to creation." Wisconsin ballyhoed for the President as "a man who had kept faith." Wyoming's advertiser painted his state as "a land of bright clear sunshine, with warmth in the heart of our people who are close to nature." Therefore, he was for Roosevelt. In behalf of the Philippine Islands, Governor General Murphy merely said "the P. I. gratefully seconds the nomination of Franklin Delano Roosevelt." Alaska put in its two cents by hailing F.D.R. for his "policy of the good neighbor and the Good Samaritan." Hawaii divided its seconding speech in two parts, part two being a ukelele group. Delegate Spinoza of Porto Rico showed his wisdom by declaring Roosevelt "the greatest friend we have had in our 38 years associated with the United States." A woman from the Canal Zone ran short of adjectives and whined for Roosevelt as "one of the greatest humanitarians the world has ever known." The spokesman for the Virgin Islands, as the morning minutes were rolling by fast, wound up the parade by hoarsely saying "Roosevelt opened the gates of prosperity. Before him the Islands couldn't get a hearing."

The whole performance reminded me of the dramatics, showmanship, mass spectacles, color, searchlights, police, secret service men, etc., etc. of the Nazi gatherings in Hitler's paradise. It all came to a climax with Roosevelt's speech at Franklin Field. Here the convention was brought to a close with at least 100,000 men and women waiting for hours despite intermittent rain to listen to the Chief Executive. Over their heads as they were waiting patiently there circled a plane bearing a streamer, "Dine, wine at Benny the Dope, Pine Street." Lily Pons graced them with a song. And finally came Roosevelt, to tell them, "*We have conquered fear*," without telling them who are the "we", whose fear was conquered and who were the "we" who did the fearing. Scores of thousands were spellbound by this angel of the microphone, as he talked of "the war for political and economic freedom." Not a syllable came from our President about the freedom to lynch in the South.

It was a well-delivered speech, replete with glittering generalities and sweeping generalizations. It was Populism revived and liberalism aflame! It offered labor, the unemployed, the farmers, "freedom of the market" and eloquent tirades against the unnamed and unaccounted for "economic royalists."

* * *

The two conventions reveal clearly that America is at the elbow of the road. Powerful social and economic forces are operating behind the backs of the Party leaders to make for a realignment in the political arena. Coming to the fore as issues are the whole problem of the Constitution, the question of social legislation, the need for the captains of finance and industry not merely accepting but also preparing some governmental regulation, if need be, at the expense of some of their individuals—in the interest of the stabilization and perpetuation of their bourgeois social order as a whole.

In this historical moment in the life of our country, in these hours and months of flux and reflux, the liberal verbiage of the Republican and Democratic platforms is unimportant. What is decisive is the crystallization of clashing class forces. And this—in the face of the chronic disequilibrium of the economic machine—is of far more vast historical significance than even the question of who will win or lose the coming presidential election. Just now, it appears certain that only if the Democratic Party will expend more energy in refusing to be elected than in fighting to be elected will Landon win. But come what may, we are on the threshold of a new and decisive day in American political life.

American Labor Looks Ahead

By WILL HERBERG

THE SUSPENSION of ten unions, with a membership of over a million, from the American Federation of Labor is an event unparalleled in the entire history of the federation. The American labor movement is indeed at a decisive turning-point in its history. And it is a real turning-point, for unionism in this country is now at a stage where a fundamentally new departure in policy and organizational strategy becomes the order of the day for the working class.

The suspension of the ten unions has not created the crisis; it has merely dramatized and accentuated it. As far back as the middle of 1932, long before the NRA, there were already signs that the spirit of helplessness and apathy that had permeated the ranks of the working class during the first years of the economic crisis, was beginning to give way before a rising flood of labor militancy, a deepening mood of discontent and unrest. These fresh, new currents in the stale atmosphere of the A. F. of L., reinforced by the far-reaching effects of the NRA, found increasingly marked expression at the conventions of the federation. Indeed, it was at the most recent of these conventions, at the Atlantic City gathering in 1935, that the powerful forces long gathering beneath the surface broke thru the petrified shell of the bureaucracy; on a series of vital questions, all centering around the great issue of industrial unionism, sharp clashes took place, reflecting a new alignment in the A. F. of L. and the appearance of a strong industrial union block under the leadership of John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman, David Dubinsky and others. Within a month, in November 1935, this block achieved formal organizational existence in the shape of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), established for the double purpose of carrying on an educational campaign for industrial unionism, on the one hand, and of stimulating and encouraging the actual organization of the basic mass-production industries along industrial union lines, on the other. At this point, the crisis in the A. F. of L. had already emerged in all its fundamental significance.

It would be a grave mistake to seek the source of this crisis in personal antagonisms, factional obstinacy, political intrigue or the struggle for power, altho unquestionably each has its place in the picture. The roots reach much deeper below the surface. In the last few years, a new situation has been created by the sudden growth of the A. F. of L., especially by its penetration into the great mass-production industries—a situation shot thru with irreconcilable contradictions. The fundamental tasks of the trade union movement, as they emerge under the new conditions, come into conflict with the traditional policies, methods and organizational forms of the A. F. of L.; the vital necessity of organizing the basic industries of this country, with an ingrained craft fetishism decades old. Great opportunities are opening up before American labor but these opportunities are duties as well; they must be grasped with courage and clear vision or else

they will turn around and demand an accounting as unfulfilled obligations. In a word, the labor movement must either go forward towards the effective unionization of the basic industries or else go down in ruin, to continue to vegetate in the same old rut is no longer possible. The choice is between life thru adaptation to new conditions and stagnation and death thru a blind clinging to old, outworn forms and traditions. Stripping the matter of all secondary considerations, it is not difficult to see that the great contending forces in the ranks of organized labor today are essentially the embodiment of this alternative and that the conflict between them is the clash between the fetters of the dead past and the promise of the living future!

* * *

That the central issue should be industrial unionism is natural enough. For industrial unionism alone offers a real hope of bringing organization to the workers in the basic mass-production industries, something upon which the whole future of the labor movement may be said to depend. But the significance of industrial unionism extends far beyond itself as an issue. It has, in fact, become the representative symbol of a new progressive spirit in the ranks of organized labor, as opposed to the hopelessly reactionary outlook of craft unionism. Fundamentally, this emergence of a virile, forward-looking tendency in the trade union movement of this country is the expression, in its peculiar American form, of the general reorientation towards the left that has been under way for some time in the international labor movement.

Nor is it any less natural that the United Mine Workers of America should form the nucleus of the industrial union block championing the forward-looking viewpoint. For, as John L. Lewis has himself repeatedly emphasized, the coal mining industry is so situated in the scheme of production that stable trade union organization within it is hardly possible unless buttressed by the extension of unionism to the steel and other mass-production industries interlocked with it. For the U.M.W.A. the fight for industrial unionism is really a matter of enlightened self-interest, of ultimate self-preservation. With the miners stand the other industrial or semi-industrial unions, some with significant progressive traditions, such as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and the United Textile Workers; in the same camp stand also whatever forces the A. F. of L. has in the mass-production industries, the auto, steel, rubber, smelter, gas and oil workers organizations. The die-hard conservative faction, on the other hand, naturally finds its stronghold in the leading craft unions, especially those in the building and metal trades.

Since its formation in November 1935, the CIO has grown considerably, extending its affiliations and expanding its activity and influence in many directions, along both of the lines originally projected. Its major concern, however, has hitherto been the organization of the steel industry and, after an agreement was reached with the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers in June 1936, this task was undertaken in real earnest. An extensive unionization campaign has been mapped out and initiated on a wide front. Political considerations of an election year have probably tended to hold things back so far, but decisive struggles and perhaps a great general strike in the steel industry are to be expected in 1937.

One thing is certainly clear—the course and outcome of the steel organizing campaign will profoundly affect the future not only of the CIO but of the labor movement as a whole.

From the very beginning, the craft union chieftains in the executive council regarded the CIO and its activities with bitter hostility. That Hutcheson and his friends were determined to smash the new movement for industrial unionism, cost what it may to labor, was already obvious at the Atlantic City convention last year. Since then, altho voices urging moderation have not been altogether lacking in its midst, the executive council has been driven by the more truculent elements to a course of destruction. The arbitrary and illegal suspension order of the August session and its confirmation on September 5, mark the most recent phases of this mad course of "rule or ruin".

With the final suspension of the CIO unions, to be followed by their exclusion from the coming convention at Tampa, the American Federation of Labor, as the main stream of the American labor movement, is definitely split. One-third of its membership, grouped in its most powerful unions, already stands outside its ranks and the end is not yet. This is the first big fact in the new situation which must be frankly recognized in its full implications.

It would be easy to list the many unfortunate consequences likely to result from such a split. But it would be mere short-sighted folly to stop there and to refuse to recognize that something of the sort is inherent in the situation and thus well-nigh inevitable. If the issue is really as fundamental as I have argued, then it seems pretty plain that concessions and a "peace of accommodation" are virtually excluded in the very nature of the case. Officially, the industrial unionists ask nothing but a free hand in organizing the mass-production industries along industrial union lines and they specifically disclaim any intention of challenging the established jurisdictions of the craft unions; for them to accept anything less as a "compromise" would mean to surrender everything. The craft union chiefs, on the other hand, realize quite well that, if carried out with any vigor and determination, the industrial union plan would mean the relegation of craft unionism to the very insignificant position granted to it by modern industry, thus hopelessly undermining their traditional predominance in the scheme of things of American trade unionism. Translating these realities into terms of power politics, we cannot escape the conclusion that the conflict is an irrepressible one, for the A. F. of L. cannot, in the long run, remain half industrial and half craft in fundamental organization. The split has come, as it was bound to come, because the rigid and ossified craft union structure of the A. F. of L. has not been able to adjust itself to the pressure exerted by the sudden growth of the industrial union movement; lacking the necessary elasticity, it simply had to give way, to crack under the impact. Nevertheless, it seems not unlikely that, had better considered and more effective tactics been employed by the CIO, things might have been brought to a head under vastly more favorable circumstances. It is not altogether out of the question that a careful policy might have created a situation in which the industrial union forces would have remained in control of the A. F. of L. and the craft union chiefs on the outside.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that not only is the split inevitable in the immediate situation, but, in its long-range implications, it definitely constitutes a necessary and progressive stage in the development of the labor movement. Once the Tampa convention is held and the expulsion of the CIO unions from the A. F. of L. confirmed (as it most likely will be unless the suspended unions are seated), the transformation of the CIO into a new federation of labor in this country will be an obvious necessity. For there will be no alternative except outright capitulation and the dissolution of the CIO, which would mean the abandonment of any serious effort to organize the workers in the basic industries and the condemnation of the whole labor movement to stagnation, dry-rot and decay. It may be taken for granted that, once definitely outside the A. F. of L., the CIO will either have to set itself up as a new federation or else face the prospect of futility and rapid disintegration.

In certain quarters there is to be found a marked disinclination to examine the far-reaching consequences of the present crisis in the labor movement, a certain timidity in facing the facts and trying to plumb their meaning. But refusing to face facts has never yet conjured them out of existence. Let us rather recognize that we are confronted with a situation of significance unparalleled in recent decades, a situation without precedent in the entire history of the A. F. of L. Let us therefore determine to approach this situation with open eyes and a clear head, free from abstract dogmas and irrelevant prejudices; in a word, let us face the facts in the realistic spirit of Marxism.

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The transformation of the CIO into a new federation of labor in this country would be—let us say so frankly—a progressive step in the development of the labor movement, a step which the new conditions not only warrant but imperatively demand. For there sometimes comes a point in history, a real critical point, at which further progress is possible only thru what seems to be an abrupt break with the past, perhaps even thru the replacement of old-established institutions and organizations by new ones, arising out of the crisis itself. Fifty years ago the main stream of the American labor movement was embodied in the Knights of Labor. This great organization, mighty in its huge membership and economic power, seemed to have the whole future before it, and yet, a decade or two later, hardly more than the memory remained of it; it had been superseded by a new organization, the American Federation of Labor. Why? Because it had exhausted the progressive possibilities of its philosophy and structure and thus had to give way to a movement better suited to the new conditions. Actually the K. of L. was a heterogeneous, multi-class organization, including in its ranks farmers, self-employed artisans and even professional men, in addition to skilled and unskilled workers. It showed not the slightest recognition of the permanent status of the worker as a wage-laborer under the present social order; it regarded him under the "classless" (really, petty bourgeois) category of "producer". It consequently rejected, as a matter of principle, the strike, the boycott or any form of genuine trade union action; instead it went in for all sorts of utopian panaceas, such as producer cooperation, credit and money schemes and land reform, all calculated to lift the worker out of his wage-labor status and to convert him

into a petty bourgeois producer; in politics it naturally functioned as the tail-end of agrarian and lower middle class reform movements. The "solidarity of labor", for which it is supposed to have stood, was not modern class solidarity at all but really petty bourgeois fraternalism and its "all-inclusiveness" was largely of the same character. It did, indeed, take part in great strikes and class battles, and a heroic part it played in them too; but it did so in violation of its dogmas and contrary to its traditions and organizational forms.

In the final quarter of the last century, a movement of this sort, reflecting so faithfully the earlier immaturity of the American proletariat, was already beginning to lose all historical reason for existence. The American working class had already been born as a class-economic entity; it had already acquired stable, permanent status in the modern capitalistic order. A labor movement that could meet these new conditions was needed. The K. of L., rigid in its outworn policies and organizational forms, could not adapt itself; it had to be superseded and it was superseded—by the American Federation of Labor.

The A. F. of L. came as the negation of the K. of L.; it was a trade union organization in the modern sense of the term. It recognized as fundamental the permanent class status of the worker as a wage-laborer and it therefore rejected with contempt all of the petty bourgeois panaceas designed to lift the working class out of itself by its own bootstraps. It placed its faith and confidence in strictly economic weapons—the strike and the boycott above all—to the point where it actually lapsed into a kind of anti-political attitude, into the "conservative syndicalism" with which the name of Gompers is so intimately associated. It did, indeed, replace the multi-class "all-inclusiveness" of the K. of L. by a more or less rigid craft system but let us not forget that all modern trade union organizations begin on craft lines. Nor must we ignore the effect of the long and bitter struggle between the two federations in confirming and exaggerating the craft union attitude of the new organization to the point where it soon became a veritable fetish. But with all that, the A. F. of L. was obviously the kind of organization that the new conditions demanded, the kind of organization that the K. of L. could not become.

But the A. F. of L. has now reached the point where it plays a role very much like that of the K. of L. fifty years ago. Its craft fetishism, strengthened by the factors making for the emergence of a labor aristocracy, has already exhausted all of its progressive possibilities and has resulted in petrification. Today new conditions demand another sharp turn—in appearance, perhaps, a mere return to the all-inclusiveness of the K. of L. but actually, in the form of industrial unionism, a return to all-inclusiveness on an immeasurably higher class level, on the realistic class basis of modern trade unionism. The replacement of the Knights of Labor by the A. F. of L. was a necessary and progressive step, yet it could be achieved only thru a split. So today, the replacement of a trade union movement founded on craft unionism by one founded on industrial unionism is a necessary and progressive step—even tho it may have to be accomplished thru a split! At bottom, the CIO represents the third stage in the dialectical development of the American labor movement, from the K. of L. to the A. F. of L., from the A. F. of L. to the CIO.

Once the A. F. of L. and the CIO face each other as rival federations, survival and ascendancy will depend primarily upon ability to meet the challenge of the new conditions, and here the CIO certainly has the overwhelming advantage. No labor movement today can have any vitality or claim to the future unless it stands ready and able to absorb the millions of workers in the basic industries of the country—but experience has amply proven that organization can be extended to these industries only on the basis of industrial unionism. Tens and thousands of men and women are certain to come pouring in from the rural areas to the main industrial centers, once the present trend is reversed with a more definite improvement in the economic situation. To assimilate them into the body of organized labor, to inspire them with its traditions and ideals, will become virtually a matter of life and death for the trade union movement, for unless labor proves able to win the allegiance of these newly proletarianized masses, they are only too likely to become pawns in the hands of the employers or victims of fascist demagoguery. But it is surely obvious that craft unionism can have no meaning for these factory hands and unskilled laborers; only industrial unionism can have any appeal to them or offer them anything significant in the way of labor organization. Only industrial unionism is in a position to meet the deadly menace of company unionism, which has made such great headway under the NRA and since, and which has shown itself almost completely invulnerable to the attacks of craft unionism.

To a considerable degree, it is plain, the future of the CIO as an independent federation will be affected by the outcome of the steel organization drive now under way. Marked success in this campaign, such as would be involved in the organization of scores of thousands of steel workers into a strong union, would place the CIO in a virtually impregnable position. The outcome of the presidential elections, too, will undoubtedly have an effect on the future of the CIO. That the election of Landon would be a great blow to it and the election of Roosevelt a considerable asset, at least immediately, is obvious. But this aspect can hardly be regarded as decisive in attempting to estimate the long-range perspectives of the CIO.

In a preceding paragraph, I emphasized the fact that, in the present situation, the issue of industrial unionism, very important tho it certainly is, really goes beyond itself and implies a generally progressive outlook in other fields as well. It is therefore pretty clear that, associated with their clash on the primary question of structural strategy, differences on a great many other issues will soon arise between the two federations. As far as the A. F. of L. is concerned, recent declarations of William Green and John P. Frey, manifesting unusual hostility towards the idea of independent labor political action, point to a strengthening of the greatly discredited "non-partisan" policy in politics and perhaps even to a revival of the reactionary philosophy of "voluntarism", officially abandoned only a few years ago. The CIO, on the other hand, will undoubtedly strive for social and labor legislation as the A. F. of L. has never done and will probably tend to look much more favorably upon the idea of independent political action and a labor party. But we cannot overlook the grave possibility that the tendency towards "governmental unionism"—or, as Lewis Lorwin has named it, "quasi-public unionism"—may meet with altogether inadequate

resistance from the CIO leadership, if indeed its dangerous implications are appreciated at all in these quarters. It is not difficult to see how, out of a reaction against the threadbare traditions of the "conservative syndicalism" of which Gompers was the apostle and out of the friendly relations now existing between the CIO leaders and the administration, there may emerge an attitude entirely too tolerant of governmental interference with or control over unionism. It was not so many months ago, let us remember, that Lewis himself proposed to "settle" the controversy in the A. F. of L. by means of a referendum of the membership conducted by—the United States Department of Labor! "Quasi-public unionism" is only too obviously "quasi-fascist unionism" for us to tolerate such a sinister trend even tho its menace may not be obvious at the moment.

Differences between the two federations are likely to manifest themselves also in such matters as international relations. It may be taken for granted that, once the CIO assumes independent existence, it will soon affiliate with the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam), with which, indeed, a number of CIO unions are already connected. But what the A. F. of L. will do on this matter is far from clear.

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It is hardly to be doubted that a bitter, long-drawn out and frequently destructive civil war in labor's ranks is inherent in the situation and is virtually unavoidable, altho responsible and well-considered efforts may help to mitigate it and enable us to avoid its worst excesses. As the two bodies confront each other at the moment, the CIO has a membership of about 1,300,000 to the 2,225,000 of the A. F. of L. (exclusive of the suspended unions). But, as John L. Lewis has emphasized, these figures do not tell the whole story. For, once deprived of its industrial unions, the A. F. of L., despite its superior numbers, becomes essentially static, incapable of extensive growth and expansion; such is the fatal logic of craft fetishism. The CIO, on the other hand, owes its very existence to its dynamic character, to its ability to reach out into those fields from which alone the labor movement can draw life and sustenance. At the very outset, there will be a struggle over the international unions not yet affiliated with the CIO. From present indications, it is likely that over a dozen such organizations, with a membership of about 250,000, will go with the new federation without much delay. Among the federal unions, too, the CIO will have a great appeal, as well as among certain organizations now altogether outside the A. F. of L. (radio workers, shipbuilders, shoe workers, technical men, etc.). The clash will become even sharper when it is not merely a question of the transference of the allegiance of a union from one federation to another but a conflict between rival unions of the two federations. As is already hinted in some unusually reckless statements made by President Green, the executive council will begin its offensive immediately after the convention—ousting CIO unions from all city and state central bodies it can control; chartering, where possible, new unions for the allegedly "vacated" jurisdictions (it is even rumored that the unspeakable Progressive Miners of America will be "recognized" as a rival to the U.M.W.A.); attempting, usually in vain, to organize opposition or breakaway movements in CIO unions, and the like. The CIO, on the other hand, will certainly not remain idle. There are a number of "indus-

trial sections" of craft unions, such as the lumber workers in the carpenters union and the transport workers in the machinists union, that have no real place in these organizations and that will be a tendency for the CIO unions to expand their jurisdiction, not always without confusion. It was eminently reasonable and proper for the U.M.W.A. to take over the coke and gas workers as District 50 of that union, but the same can hardly be said for the inclusion of a local of pickle-packers in the auto workers organization! Breakaway movements of sections of the A. F. of L., to be strongly deprecated as dangerous and self-defeating, are also to be expected. And, of course, the CIO will quite properly not refrain from setting up its own city and state labor bodies where it cannot capture those of the A. F. of L. For each organization, A. F. of L. and CIO alike, such aggression and mutual "raiding" will be virtually inevitable for, to each, constant expansion will become the very law of life!

But, in the long run, the final outcome of the organizational struggle between the two federations will be determined not by this internecine warfare but by the effectiveness of each in organizing the unorganized, in unionizing the hundreds of thousands of workers in the great mass-production industries. The decisive test of the CIO will come in this field; if it is to emerge ascendant as the recognized labor movement of this country, its dynamic possibilities must be realized by actually establishing unionism, for the first time, among the steel, auto, rubber, radio and electrical equipment, glass, textile, metal mining, chemical, oil and gas and other workers in those industries that are basic to the country's economic life.

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It should be clear by this time that, in its nature and perspectives, the CIO differs fundamentally from all previous breakaway movements from the A. F. of L.—from the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, from the Industrial Workers of the World and from the Trade Union Unity League. Industrial unionism was indeed an essential element of the I.W.W. program, but only in theory; in practise it was virtually disregarded, in general agitation as well as in organization. For the I.W.W. came at a time when trustification and large-scale mass-production were just beginning and the progressive possibilities of the A. F. of L., as a predominantly craft organization, were as yet far from exhausted. The I.W.W. was a movement not of a mature industrial proletariat but of newly proletarianized or semi-proletarian strata—migratory workers, lumber workers, Colorado metal miners and the like. By the same token, its radicalism was not genuine proletarian class consciousness, altho the Marxian terminology was frequently employed; it was "frontier activism," frontier individualism, in revolt against the constraints of industrialism. It did not take long for the I.W.W. to degenerate, thru the force of its own internal logic, into a political group, into a syndicalist sect with all of the characteristic vagaries of that faith.

The De Leonite S.T.&L.A. and the Communist Party's T.U.U.L. also included industrial unionism as part of their programs but for neither was the issue of any great practical importance. These dual centers were established—it is important to emphasize—not because conditions in the labor movement imperatively demanded a new departure but because such a step became necessary for party-political reasons. De Leon's curious

adventures with the K. of L. and the A. F. of L. before he launched his Alliance, are well known and we still remember clearly enough how the T. U. U. L. was born out of the sharp left turn in the policy of the Communist International. At bottom, therefore, both were inherently artificial constructions, having no connection whatever with American reality or roots in American conditions. Because they came into existence and functioned entirely as auxiliaries of a political party, these organizations naturally did not possess a vestige of that autonomy and self-determination which experience has shown are absolutely necessary for a healthy trade union movement. In fact, they were trade union centers only in name; primarily they were trade union departments of a political party.

All three, the I. W. W., as well as the S. T. & L. A. and the T. U. U. L., were dualistic in principle, and in this lay the seed of death. Each regarded itself not as a part or a wing or a section of the labor movement, but as the labor movement itself, whole and entire. To them the A. F. of L. was not a labor organization at all; it was a capitalistic or "social-fascist" aggregation to be smashed at all costs. Small minorities of radical workers and their sympathizers therefore deserted the mass organizations in order to set up "pure", "pick-and-span" unions of their own. And it is only part of the perverted logic of dual unionism that precisely the more progressive organizations or those nearest to industrial unionism, such as the coal miners', women's garment and textile unions, were the ones to be split in the crusade of destruction!

Surely it is unnecessary to emphasize the fundamental differences between the CIO and every one of these adventures in dual unionism. The CIO arises out of the burning needs of the labor movement, reflecting the emergence of fundamentally new conditions, just as the craft unionist A. F. of L. arose out of the needs of fifty years ago. It includes in its ranks the most truly proletarian sections of the American working class yet organized and its very reason for existence is to make possible the organization of the rest. It is not, of course, a partisan auxiliary of any sort and therefore possesses to the full the autonomy it needs. And, finally, the dogmatic dualism to which I referred in the above paragraph, is utterly foreign to its nature, altho outcroppings here and there are not altogether out of the question. If we are seeking for historical analogies by which we may be aided to grasp the role of the CIO at the present moment, let us look to the A. F. of L. in the days of its origin rather than to the various dual unionist ventures that have plagued the American labor movement at various stages of its development.

In the few weeks that remain to the A. F. of L. convention, the efforts of all progressive elements must be directed towards preserving unity in the labor movement, in the only way that such unity can possibly be preserved—by permitting the membership of the A. F. of L. to express its will on the issue, thru a referendum or the submission of the whole controversy to the Tampa convention or some other form of democratic procedure. This means, of course, that the illegal suspension of the ten unions must be lifted and their delegates freely seated at the convention. Local unions, city and state central bodies and other units of the A. F. of L. should not lose a moment in taking their stand upon this program of unity and democracy. Naturally, it would not be very advisable for new affilia-

tions to the CIO to be effected during this brief period, for any unions so affiliating would be barred from the Tampa convention. I take for granted, of course, the desirability of preparing for a vigorous fight at the convention itself for the purpose of having the suspended unions regularly seated and the ruinous policy of the executive council halted. Unfortunately, there seems to be great uncertainty in CIO ranks on this question, John L. Lewis, for example, apparently regarding the whole matter with studied indifference. But it should be obvious that such an attitude is not altogether unwelcome to the executive council which could ask for nothing better than to be allowed to have its own way, unchallenged, at Tampa. Precisely the opposite should be the outlook of the CIO—a fight to the last ditch for the preservation of unity in the labor movement. Such a policy is not only a manifest duty in the immediate situation; if effectually pursued, it will also give the CIO forces an important point of vantage for the big struggle ahead.

In the last analysis, of course, the responsibility for preserving or destroying the unity of the A. F. of L. rests entirely with the craft union chieftains who dominate the executive council. And it would be futile self-deception to refuse to recognize that there is very little likelihood for any change of attitude on their part in the next few weeks. The convention will come and go with the CIO unions excluded. A new federation of labor will appear on the scene confronting the A. F. of L. as the A. F. of L. once confronted the Knights of Labor. For us, the class conscious and progressive elements in the labor movement, there will be only one course—unequivocal support of the CIO as a necessary and progressive manifestation in the development of American trade unionism. All energies will have to be thrown into the effort to build up the CIO as the dominant and recognized trade union center in this country, as the main stream of the American labor movement.*

In pursuance of this general aim, it will be the task of the progressives constantly to emphasize the necessity for the CIO to turn its efforts as much as possible away from mutually destructive warfare with the A. F. of L. to the far more decisive problem of organizing the millions of workers in the great mass production industries. If any real headway is made by the CIO in this direction, its permanent and leading position will be established beyond challenge.

In the same way, it will be necessary to combat the spirit, theory and practice of dualism—the conception that rival organizations are not really labor organizations at all; that they must be smashed at all costs; that small groups or minorities must desert them, etc. Under no circumstances can we permit that, in the confusion, dualist tendencies and sentiments, which have caused such havoc in the labor movement in the past, be allowed to raise their head again.

In the situation created by the coexistence of two federations engaged in a desperate struggle for survival, the issue of unity will assume a new

* It is not impossible that, under the impact of the crisis, some national or international unions may decide to remain altogether independent of both federations. Such a move would be seriously detrimental to the unions concerned as well as to the labor movement as a whole, tending to multiply confusion and give impetus to the forces of disintegration.

and even more vital significance. It will then come to mean the reunification of the two federations on such a basis as to make possible the uninterrupted progress of the labor movement, that is, on the basis of industrial unionism and democracy. In all the conflict and turmoil, it will be our duty to hold aloft the banner of unity. Never must we allow the divided condition of the labor movement to be accepted indifferently or to be taken for granted as natural and inevitable. Continuing our present efforts to preserve the unity of labor, a concerted movement aiming at the reunification on a sound and constructive basis will have to be set in motion by the progressives in both federations just as soon as the split becomes an established fact.

These are grave and responsible tasks facing the progressives and we will be able to measure up to them only if we succeed in building up, both in the A. F. of L. and in the CIO, strong and well-organized progressive movements working towards a common end. Such an independent progressive force must necessarily find its basis in collaboration among the class conscious elements in the unions, particularly the S.P., C.P. and C.P.O. forces. Initiated at the Atlantic City Convention of the A. F. of L. in 1935, such collaboration has continued and developed, despite many shortcomings and setbacks, during the last year; today it has become all the more necessary in view of the critical situation in labor's ranks. A progressive movement of this sort, based on essential agreement on orientation, program and tasks, can become a really decisive power in the near future.

Communism and War

SINCE ERCOLIS report on war preparations and the adoption of resolutions on the same question at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, the Communist Opposition has maintained that the Comintern position lacked clarity of principle and a sound program of action; that as a result, the Communist Parties may deviate dangerously from a correct position on war. Bela Kun, speaking for the Communist International, now answers us in the magazine "*Kommunistische Internationale*" (Communist International). He declares that it is contrary to all Marxist principles to decide upon the definite position of the Communist Party on war as long as war has not become an actual fact and that, in abstaining from making any such decisions, the Communist International had given proof of its strict adherence to Marxist principles.

It is correct that in defining the communist attitude toward war, we must consider nothing but the actual situation. We wish to add, however, that this means the actual situation in its widest aspect.

Before the World War, nobody had an accurate, full knowledge of what course actual events would take. But it was possible to tell in advance what the historic characteristics of the coming war would be, i.e., long before 1914 the knowledge of the economic and political nature of capitalist development enabled people to predict that it would be an im-

perialist war. It was on this sort of knowledge that the Basle Congress of the Second International based its decisions as to the policies of the international labor movement in case of war.

The Marxist analysis of present world affairs reveals that, compared with pre-war times, the situation today shows certain new aspects. We have to reckon first of all with the possibility of revolutionary and imperialist wars. It therefore becomes imperative to review the plan for working class action in case of war in the light of this new situation, all the more imperative in view of the fact that it is always more difficult to adjust oneself to new conditions than to follow the beaten path.

Sometimes our criticisms are met with the reply that the Communist International did not enter into a full discussion of its war program for reasons of Soviet foreign policy. We consider this a very weak argument. The dealings of the Soviet government and the leaders of the C.P.S.U. with the capitalist governments, are one thing, the dealings of the Communist International with the various Communist parties, another. Diplomatic caution and secrecy are required in the interests of Soviet foreign policy, but the interests of the Communist International demand plain talk, exhaustive analysis of all pertinent facts and problems and a set purpose of action.

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The attitude of the revolutionary working class towards the imperialist wars and wars of national liberation was clearly defined in Lenin's writings published in the years between 1914 and 1918. The guiding principles and main tactics for working class action in such wars were also laid down in instructions he gave to the delegates to the Hague Conference in 1922, in his polemical writings against social chauvinism and social pacifism (centrism), as well as in his criticism of Rosa Luxemburg's Junius brochure, and in various other articles written against people who had expressed themselves on the national question.

The main principles that he established were expressed in two slogans: The slogan of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war, and that of revolutionary defeatism. It is of the utmost importance to understand that the two slogans are *different* and that they have to be considered *separately*.

The slogan of transforming the imperialist war into civil war is a concrete form of the Stuttgart resolution of the Second International (1907) on the revolutionary utilization of the coming war. The general revolutionary formula receives a definite content by the specific reference to civil war—armed insurrection—as the necessary means for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Without the adoption of this slogan, all talk about the revolution at a given stage of the class struggle means nothing but so many words. The slogan implies preliminary action thru the establishing of illegal organizations, the sponsoring of immediate demands of the workers, peasants and soldiers, revolutionary propaganda in the hinterland and in the army, and the organization of the insurrection itself. It is the *fundamental* revolutionary slogan since it emphasizes the fact that in case of imperialist war, revolution should be the chief aim of the working class, and that all other ideas and aims must be subordinated to that. The principle expressed in this slogan holds true for all cases of imperialist

war, no matter how many changes may be made in the tactical course which depend on local conditions, the general war situation, economic circumstances, degree of class consciousness and revolutionary ardor of the working class, the mood of the men in the army and of the people in the hinterland, etc.

The principle of revolutionary defeatism is of secondary importance and must be considered in relation to the principle of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war. It implies that in the imperialist war the working class must carry out its revolutionary program *regardless of the effect this may have on the military operations of its own country*. It also implies that revolutionary action of the working class seriously endangers the success of the imperialist military campaign and that revolutionists therefore cannot be concerned with the victory of their own country.

But the principle of defeatism does not always hold true. It loses its validity when its application might endanger the ultimate role, or in short, if it would harm the revolution.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks acted according to these principles. They retained the slogan of revolutionary defeatism until the revolution of March 1917, until the overthrow of Czarism. They gave it up toward the end of the Kerensky period when the Germans were advancing on Petrograd and the Russian counter-revolutionists appeared ready to support the German occupation of Petrograd in order to deal a death blow to the very heart of the revolution. At this moment the Bolsheviks issued the call for a counter-attack against the German offensive and for the defense of Petrograd and the Northern front. It was on the eve of the October Revolution and the Bolsheviks understood very well that the German forces would strike against the revolutionary working class. This happened at a time when the workers were armed and Bolshevik influence had become strong in the Petrograd garrison and on the Northern front. If the Bolsheviks had retained the slogan of revolutionary defeatism they would have struck against their own forces and played into the hands of the counter-revolution which favored foreign intervention.

This is a good illustration of the fact that the slogan of revolutionary defeatism must be used in the interests of the proletarian revolution. When the imperialist war was in the process of transition to a revolutionary war (it was necessary to defend Petrograd against the Germans for in Petrograd the revolutionary working class had gained the upper hand) the counter-revolution preached defeatism. In order to cling to their power, they were willing to pay the price of German occupation. After the October Revolution they came out openly in favor of foreign intervention and supported it.

But the Bolsheviks had never issued the slogan of active support of German imperialism (just as they had never advocated alliance with Japanese imperialism as did Pilsudski and his group in 1903-04), they worked for the defeat of Czarism during the world war by paving the way for the revolution. *Revolutionary defeatism* distinguishes itself very sharply from defeatism pure and simple and from the counter-revolutionary defeatism that calls for the help of the imperialists in the enemy camp in order to forestall "threatening" revolution or to crush a victorious one. Revolutionary defeatism is one of the instruments of proletarian revolu-

tion and stands in contrast to counter-revolutionary defeatism and imperialism of all national brands. Counter-revolutionary defeatism transforms itself very logically into an instrument of foreign imperialism. Revolutionary defeatism however utilizes the imperialistic conflicts for the proletarian revolution against the imperialists at home and abroad.

The slogan of revolutionary defeatism is also directed against social-pacifism which puts the working class of its own country into the service of the imperialist war mongers and which allies itself with the ruling classes against the revolution.

The slogan of revolutionary defeatism is also directed against social-pacifists or centrists who subordinate revolutionary action to the interests of their own imperialists by helping to insure their victory. In practice this amounts to nothing else than the restriction of all revolutionary action so long as the borders remain unprotected. Revolutionary defeatism opposes centrism on the ground that helping to insure an imperialist victory is tantamount to crushing the revolution.

The slogan of revolutionary defeatism is also directed against the opinion that Rosa Luxemburg expressed in the *Junius* brochure. According to this opinion, revolution does not contradict national defense but provides the means to stem foreign invasion even more effectively.

As part of her argument Rosa Luxemburg refers to the great French revolution, the Jacobin wars, the overthrow of the monarchy, actions of the Girondists, the rule of the Convention and the revolutionary terror which were all means of fighting back the armies of the counter-revolution and of insuring the victory of the bourgeois revolution within the French borders.

Lenin's polemics against this opinion are of special interest today. Why did Lenin refute this statement that the Jacobin wars were parallel to modern national wars? Because Lenin showed that the class character of the Jacobin wars differed from the class character of imperialist wars. In the period of the bourgeois revolution, national defense meant the defense and continuance of the bourgeois revolution, its extension to other lands, and the further destruction of feudalism. Although the Jacobins were able to carry thru the bourgeois revolution only with the aid of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and the workers against the possessing classes, they nevertheless established bourgeois (capitalist) class rule. The revolutionary wars, which could only be waged by the lower bourgeoisie, or the "people," by using terror against the upper bourgeoisie of France to swing it into line, were nevertheless wars which served the interests of this bourgeoisie, wars that had a bourgeois class character. Under the conditions of the bourgeois revolution in France, the interests of the revolutionary leadership were at times identical with the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Once the success of the revolutionary wars was insured, Jacobin rule was broken because it proved superfluous and contradictory to bourgeois interests which had been strengthened thru the wars, economically and politically.

But conditions in the period of capitalist decay and imperialism, thru which we are passing now, are entirely different from what they were in the days of the great French Revolution. The class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has developed and sharpened into open

antagonism that will, according to the logic of history, lead to the proletarian revolution and the destruction of bourgeois rule in all forms. So long as the bourgeois retains power, its wars are necessarily imperialist wars, waged under the pretence of national defense, for the purpose of strengthening its positions of power and gaining new ones.

Revolutionary wars in terms of the Jacobins, that is, in terms of bourgeois rule, are no longer possible because capitalism has changed from a progressive into a reactionary force and the bourgeois from a revolutionary class into a counter-revolutionary one, a process which manifested itself in the sharpening of the antagonism between the capitalists and the working class.

Under modern conditions, a revolutionary war can only mean a war that is waged by a working class which has seized power or like the Bolsheviks on the eve of October, 1917, is about to seize it.

Lenin clearly pointed out that in the period of imperialism only those wars may rightly be called wars for national liberation which are waged by the colonial or semi-colonial people against their imperialist oppressors. As these are wars having a bourgeois revolutionary, that is, a progressive character, the working class of the oppressed countries must guide them and utilize them for its own revolutionary purpose in the fulfillment of which task it has to be supported by the working class of the leading capitalist countries.

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If it is necessary to review the position of the revolutionary working class on war, it is chiefly due to the fact that the Soviet Union has become a tremendous power in the economic, political and military sense. Civil war within her borders ceased more than a decade ago and so did foreign intervention which existed in the form of lending aid to the White Guards. Big capitalist countries established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union; she has become a member of the League of Nations and has entered into military alliance with France and Czechoslovakia which may, under certain circumstances, line her up on the side of these two countries in a war. The U.S.S.R. possesses a highly developed heavy industry and an army provided with the best technical equipment. Her agriculture is successfully organized along socialist lines for large scale production, which accomplishment emphasizes the fact that the kulaks, the only lingering capitalist element, were wiped out as a class and the peasants swung into line.

What conclusions can be drawn from these facts?

1) Counter-revolutionary intervention can no longer be organized as was done before, in the style of a colonial expedition on the basis of a mutual assistance pact between the counter-revolutionary forces inside and those outside of the country. Intervention today means nothing less than a great war into which the capitalist powers would have to throw their full forces with the risk of losing out completely.

2) The Soviet Union may be lined up on the side of one or several imperialist states against another or several other imperialist states.

3) The influence of the Soviet Union as a power for strengthening and supporting the proletarian revolution in other countries has grown considerably.

In substance this means that we are facing, for the first time, the

possibility of a great *revolutionary war* led by a workers state against the big capitalist powers. This possibility implies that the revolutionary working class will come to the aid of the working class state and that the capitalists will throw all their forces into the battle.

Further facts that must be considered are the emergence of German Fascism leading imperialism towards a war of revenge; the Japanese conquest of Manchuria; the advance of Japanese imperialism in China; the African campaign of Italian Fascism. These facts indicate all too clearly that the battle for the redivision of the spoils won in the world war has begun and that we are on the eve of a new imperialist war which threatens to become more devastating than the first one. As the chief gainers in the last war, England and France are interested in the preservation of the status quo and in peace. This establishes a basis of an understanding between these two countries and the Soviet Union and prompted the latter to enter into the League of Nations and to conclude a military treaty with France and Czechoslovakia.

It is well known that Lenin had first thought of the possibility of accepting French aid for the purpose of defending the Russian Revolution against German imperialism. France did not agree to it at that time. Today however a military pact exists, pledging mutual aid in certain cases. This does not mean, of course, that this aid will necessarily be given, but the pact exists and the working class must consider all problems connected with it.

* * *

On the basis of the preceding analysis of old and new facts, we wish to give a summary of what we consider the right policy of working class action in war time.

1) *In case of war between imperialist powers: the fundamental slogan of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war remains unchanged. The slogan of revolutionary defeatism must be linked to it as explained above.*

A few additional remarks may help to round out what was said before.

Today every bourgeois state must be considered an imperialist state regardless of its size or possession of colonies. Switzerland is small but she is a typical country of export capital and as such, is tied to the big imperialist countries by a thousand threads. In this connection we also wish to point out that it is of no fundamental importance for the revolutionary working class whether an imperialist state is on the defensive or the offensive—trying to protect its possessions or attempting to acquire new ones. The difference in itself is of little significance in view of the fact that a state can easily shift from a defensive to an offensive position and vice versa (e.g., England in the world war). It is equally unimportant for the working class to know which of the two warring imperialist powers is the aggressor. Nor does it concern the workers what the form of government that the imperialist countries waging war on each other represent. Imperialism is imperialism whether bourgeois rule expresses itself in the form of a Fascist dictatorship on in that of bourgeois democracy. Lenin and the Bolsheviks rebuked Plekhanov when he justified his chauvinism with the necessity of defeating Prussian militarism, and the German Spartacists rebuked the patriots among the German Social-Democrats when they de-

tended their position on the ground that Czarism is the bulwark of reaction and had to be fought. Both the Bolsheviks and the Spartacists scoffed at those imperialists who pretended to have gone to war in order to make the world safe for democracy.

Fascism is today the most reactionary form of bourgeois rule, but the working class could not support a bourgeois democratic state against a Fascist state without betraying socialism. There is no doubt that the imperialist states that have a democratic form of government will take advantage of the hatred the workers have for the Fascist states and use it for their own interests. In order to prevent this, we must start to educate the workers now, before the bourgeoisie begins to operate the propaganda machine with the aid of the social-chauvinists.

2) *In case of war of national liberation waged by the peoples in colonial or semi-colonial countries against their imperialist oppressors (Ethiopia, China):*

a) *The working class in the imperialist countries must support these wars of national emancipation.*

b) *The working class in the exploited territories must utilize them for the overthrow of both the native and imperialist oppressors. It serves its purpose of helping to assure the victory of its own country and the defeat of the imperialist armies.*

3) *In case of the revolutionary war of the Soviet Union: the slogan of revolutionary defeatism has lost all meaning in a workers state where all forces must be rallied to the defense of the state in order to bring victory. To advocate defeatism in this country would be counter-revolutionary and a criminal offense punishable as such.*

For the working class of the imperialist countries, the slogan assumes new form. It implies that it must weaken the military strength of its own country and lend active support to the Soviet Union. The weapon that best suits the purpose is mass action.

It is possible that the war machine will be temporarily crippled by the class struggle within the country, but this is the price that must be paid for the successful transformation of the imperialist war into a revolutionary war of defense. The paralysis of the class struggle would only strengthen the bourgeoisie and enable it to betray the U.S.S.R. and to turn upon it.

Special emphasis must be put on the fact that the action of the Red Army can never become a substitute for revolutionary action in the imperialist countries. The victory of the proletarian revolution must be brought about by the efforts of the working class of these countries. Red Army intervention may accelerate the victory of the revolution, provided the revolutionary movement is rooted deep enough in the masses, sufficiently organized and under the right leadership. If the working class in the imperialist countries cannot live on its own resources, Red Army aid would not spell joint victory but joint defeat.

We have always referred to the revolutionary war as the *revolutionary war of defense*. The expression is used not as a mere figure of speech, but for the following very concrete reasons:

a) The purpose and aims of a workers state are served by revolution rather than by war which exacts a so much heavier toll of life and loss of material goods.

b) The anti-imperialist character of communism which makes the workers state the strongest champion for peace in a world threatened by the constant menace of war.

4) *In case of war that calls for joint action of the Soviet Union and an imperialist power against another imperialist power: It remains to be seen whether the military alliance that exists between the Soviet Union and France and Czechoslovakia will actually mean anything. But since such alliances exist we must consider all aspects of the situation from the point of view of the working class. These alliances are strictly military and not—we wish to say with special emphasis—political understandings based on common interests like the alliances of the imperialist states before, during and after the World War.*

It lies in the character of the Soviet Union as a working class state that such alliances are limited to defense and that her aims and purposes must needs be anti-imperialistic. The truth of this statement is fully borne out by the fact that she guarantees all nations the right of self-determination and that she will support, to the best of her ability, the revolutionary working class in the imperialist countries that are at war with her.

The imperialist state on the side of which the Soviet Union may be lined up will of course have its imperialist aims. They are kept secret as long as victory seems far off, but when victory is assured they become evident in the form of demands for colonies or new territories nearer home. They will also reveal themselves in the attempt to crush the revolutionary working class in the enemy imperialist country by compromising with the republican or fascist, counter-revolutionary government and by eventually joining hands with it against the working class and its Soviet Union.

The latent antagonism between the Soviet Union and her collaborator may not be evident at the beginning of the war but must manifest itself with growing strength the moment victory seems assured. What makes collaboration possible in spite of this latent antagonism is the necessity of warding off the common enemy.

The principles that the workers of the Soviet Union must follow in case of joint action with an imperialist ally were clearly outlined by Lenin. For the working class of the imperialist state having an alliance with the Soviet Union, the fundamental slogan of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war remains unchanged but assumes new, concrete forms. In these countries double possibilities exist for the successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie, possibilities growing out of the conditions that follow in the wake of an imperialist war and such as are offered by the active support of the Soviet Union. The workers must utilize this situation. As the active support of the Red Army is impeded by the war machinery of the bourgeois state, they must aim at the overthrow of this state and transform the imperialist war into a revolutionary war for the defense of the Soviet Union and their own revolution. The successful accomplishment of this task requires that the working class of said country should at no time compromise with the bourgeoisie, that it should refuse to vote for the war budget and the war credits, steadfastly fight against imperialism and pave the way with the revolutionary propaganda for the establishment of workers' soldiers and peasants councils, workers' control of production and distribution, etc.

Underground Cadres in Germany

By LEO

(Continuation)

VI

THE TRUTH of the matter is that Comrade Stark lacks all understanding of the role of illegal cadres and consequently fails to realize that under present conditions the German trade union movement must of necessity assume the form of illegal cadre organizations. The slogan for the formation of "class trade unions" as advanced by Comrade Stark does not refer to illegal unions but to semi-legal, broad, opposition groups within the Nazi "Labor Front". Furthermore, many Communist Party members deny the necessity of building up the trade union movement in the form of illegal cadre organizations, since underground leadership is provided by the Communist Party fractions in precisely that fashion.

In answer we point to our analysis which has shown that Comrade Stark, as well as the leaders of the German Communist Party, have no *conception whatever* of the role and significance of underground cadres on the trade union field or in the Communist Party. In order to achieve successful revolutionary activity, the cadres of the Communist Party must be engaged in effective trade union work. This becomes impossible unless they realize the necessity of building illegal cadre organizations as a first step toward the creation of a trade union movement.

The question may be raised: why build two types of underground cadre organizations? Our reasons are: first, both types have different functions. The Communist Party has the task of leading the class struggle of the working class in its entirety and of organizing the revolution against fascism. For this very reason the Party cannot participate *directly* in a leading capacity in the economic struggles of the workers. These struggles, moreover, will and must involve workers who are not as yet ready to acknowledge the political leadership of the Communist Party. The Party exerts influence on the trade unions thru its fractions. Secondly, there is a difference of composition in the membership of the trade union cadres on the one hand, and the Party cadres on the other. The trade union cadre organization is open not only to Communists but to all workers ready to wage economic struggles against the bosses and against the fascist dictatorship and possessed of the ability to do underground work. Hence, the underground trade union cadres can influence working class sections that the Party cadres may never be able to reach *directly*. The more effective the work of the Communist fractions in the underground unions, the greater their political influence.

In keeping with his false evaluation of the "Labor Front", Comrade Stark calls for "free trade union groups . . . to be formed in the main within the 'Labor Front' functioning as centers of opposition." It is clear that he fails to realize that the future trade unions must be *independent* organizations free to wage *independent* economic struggles of the working

class. In limiting the role of the trade unions to that of an opposition within the "Labor Front" Stark creates the illusion that this fascist organization can at least partially serve the interests of the class struggle. The fact of the matter is that the disruptive groups now working within the "Labor Front" under the supervision of illegal trade union cadres (or Communist Party cadres) cannot perform the tasks of the latter. They can at best support the illegal trade union cadres in their efforts to organize and lead economic struggles.

In their attempt to justify their false slogans in regard to Communist activity in the fascist trade unions, the leaders of the Communist International and of the Communist Party of Germany cite the fact that the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership were active in the Zubatov unions. The comrades forget that *at no time* did the Bolsheviks or Lenin issue a general appeal to the working class to join the Zubatov trade unions and to take responsible posts in these unions. Unlike the present leadership of the Communist Party of Germany, the Bolsheviks pursued a policy of sending reliable forces into these unions to work under the supervision of the Party with the avowed purpose of disruption. Furthermore, Lenin distinguished between disruptive work done in the Zubatov trade unions and the necessity of organizing illegal unions. He very clearly stated:

"Legalization, therefore, will not solve the problem of creating a trade union organization that will be as public and as extensive as possible (but we would be extremely glad if the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs provided even a partial opportunity for such a solution—to which end we must fight them as strenuously as possible!). There only remains the past of *secret trade union organization*; and we must offer every possible assistance to the workers, who (as we definitely know) have already adopted this path." (*What Is To Be Done: Collected Works*, Vol. II, Page 191. Emphasis ours.)

In this connection Lenin also pointed out that illegal trade unions must of necessity be illegal cadre organizations with a following of sympathizers to whom they issue instructions.

"A small, compact core, consisting of reliable, experienced and hardened workers, with responsible agents in the principal districts and connected by all the rules of strict secrecy with the organizations of revolutionists, can, with the wide support of the masses and without an elaborate set of rules, perform all the functions of a trade union organization, and perform them, moreover, in the manner Social Democrats desire. Only in this way can we secure the consolidation and development of a Social Democratic trade union movement, in spite of the gendarmes.

"It may be objected that an organization which is so loose that it is not even formulated, and which even has no enrolled and registered members, cannot be called an organization at all. That may very well be. I am not out for names. But this 'organization without members' can do everything that is required, and will, from the very outset, guarantee the closest contact between our future trade unionists and Socialism. Only an incorrigible utopian would want a wide organization of workers, with elections, report, universal suffrage, etc.,

under autocracy.

"The moral to be drawn from this is a simple one. If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organization of revolutionists, we can guarantee the stability of the movement as a whole, and carry out the aims of both Social Democracy and of trade unionism. If, however, we begin with a wide workers' organization, supposed to be most 'accessible' to the masses, when as a matter of fact it will be most accessible to the police, we shall neither achieve the aims of Social Democracy nor of trade unionism; we shall not escape from our primitiveness, and because we constantly remain scattered and dispersed, we shall make only the trade unions of the Zhabarov and Ozerov type most accessible to the masses." (*Ibid*, page 194. Emphasis ours).

The above statements of Lenin represent a devastating criticism of the position of Comrade Stark and of the CPG leadership on the question of illegal cadres and particularly on illegal unions.

Ignoring the teachings of Lenin, the leadership of the C.P.G. until recently called for the formation of underground "mass trade unions." Chiefly as a result of the criticism of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition), this slogan has been virtually dropped in official publications. But there has been no real change of policy. Stark continues to speak of the necessity of exploiting the "legal" and "semi-legal" opportunities to work within the "Labor Front". He proposes the following in all seriousness:

"These delegations and commissions trusted and elected by their fellow-workers (elected in a legal and semi-legal fashion as Stark proposes) can easily become united front committees in the factories, as well as organization committees for the formation of a core of agents and for the creation of trade union groups. Needless to say, they will be quite loosely organized at first but they will gradually develop into firm organs."

Stark would have these "firm" and "permanent factory organs", which must at present remain underground, chosen by publicly elected delegations. The organization committees for the formation of trade unions are also to be chosen by these delegations. In actual practice this would result in the arrest and conviction of the most active revolutionary forces. His proposal to elect "confidential keymen" in the factories is just as ridiculous. Once these workers are *openly elected*, they cease to be *underground* functionaries. We are not confronted here with the problem of trade union democracy. Elections for underground offices can be held *only within* the framework of illegal organizations. How else preserve the confidential character of the organization?

Public or quasi-public committees cannot determine the composition and policy of illegal cadres; on the contrary, the illegal cadres must influence and direct the activity of such committees as may spring into existence from time to time.

VII

The CPG has given up its dual union policy. The correction of one

type of tactical error does not prevent new ones, particularly, since the membership of the CPG has never discussed the sources of the ultra-left course. Stark's article indicates that the CPG is about to embark on a new false tactical course. It is going from one extreme to another. The exponents of the theory of "social fascism" have discovered virtually unlimited possibilities for legal activity under the Hitler dictatorship. The exponents of dual unionism who insisted on the impossibility of winning over reformist unions now believe that the fascist "Labor Front" can even partially serve the interest of the class struggle.

Both errors result from a common fallacy; both point to misunderstanding of the role of the Communist Party as the leader and organizer of the revolutionary class struggle. In the past the leaders of the CPG thought to evade the difficult task of winning over the trade unions and the reformist workers to communism by setting up their own red unions. Today, they are attempting to evade the difficult task of preparing mass actions by initiating such mass activities without adequate preparation, relying on "legal" and "semi-legal" opportunities.

What is the next step in Germany? We quote Lenin on the problems of Communist parties of capitalist countries. (Proceedings of the Fourth Communist Congress, page 118)

"Foreigners need something different. They need something higher. First of all, they have to learn how to understand all that we have written about the organization and upbuilding of the Communist Parties, which they have subscribed to without reading and without understanding it. You foreign comrades must make this your first duty. This resolution must be carried into effect. These things cannot be done overnight. That is absolutely impossible. The resolution is too Russian. It is a reflection of Russian experience. That is why it cannot be understood by foreigners, and why foreigners are not content to treat this resolution as a miraculous picture which they are to hang on the wall and to pray to. That sort of attitude will not help us forward. You will have to make a portion of Russian experience your own. How can this be done? I do not know. *Perhaps the fascists in Italy will do us a good turn by showing the Italians how. After all they are not so highly cultured that the development of Black Hundreds in Italy has become impossible. This may have a good effect.*"

Every German Communist must cherish these words, particularly, at present. The experiences of the Bolsheviks and the teachings of Lenin on the role and methods of work of illegal cadre organizations must be applied to the German situation. Thereby hangs the fate of the German revolution.

The objective conditions in Germany today favor our cause. The fascist regime is in an economic and political crisis. Dissatisfaction among the broad masses is growing. The subjective factor, however, is lacking; there is no *organizing* force, such as effectively working cadres of the Communist Party and of the unions could provide. The anti-fascist workers are increasingly aware of this shortcoming. We quote from the "*Deutscher Nachrichtendienst*" (Nov. 9, 1934) published by the Prague National Committee of the Socialist Party of Germany.

"We realize more and more that *this general dissatisfaction is not as yet a political factor*. Our comrades have by no means lost their faith in the future. . . . *They are, however, fully cognizant of the fact that we must first have organized forces that will systematically undermine the Hitler dictatorship and at the same time point the way out of fascism.*"

The author of this statement is evidently capable of independent thought and does not follow the guidance of the leaders of the Socialist Party.

The very fact that these workers voice such thoughts shows that a well-functioning illegal cadre organization could rally these forces around itself, and could wield tremendous influence among the working class population. It is absolutely essential that Communist workers oppose the proposals of Stark and, together with the CPGO fight for the application of true Leninist tactics in deed as well as in word.

The realization of Stark's policy would justify Social Democracy in its contention that it is impossible to work with the Communists because of their recklessness.

The realization of the CPGO policy, however, will insure unity of action between the Socialist and Communist workers for the purpose of organizing joint anti-fascist mass actions.

The leadership of the CPG will try to impose a false tactical course. The membership must resist such a move to the utmost; it must demand that the problems of underground Party and trade union work in Germany be discussed *thoroughly* by the membership, particularly, by those comrades who have been and still are in the forefront of the underground struggle today.

The opportunist course of Stark must be replaced by the Leninist conception of underground activity.

January, 1935.

Problems of British Labor Party

By JAMES CHRISTIE

THE British Labor Party is a political body peculiar to Britain. It has no parallel in any other first line imperialist country. Although traditionally Social Democratic, unlike other Social Democratic Parties, it is a federated body. At one time it was composed of a federation of the trade unions, the individual Labor Party members, the Cooperative Society, the I.L.P., some members of the Communist Party, and other groups. Since 1928, however, the C.P., and since 1932 the I.L.P., have been outside of its scope.

The manner in which the C.P. was thrown out by the Labor Party

must be clearly understood in order to get a clear perspective on the present application of the C.P. for affiliation.

After the general strike, the grovelling, cowardly attitude of the MacDonalds became known and created a widespread discontent among the rank and file of the labor movement.

The C.P. correctly attempted to lead this discontent into the channels of open revolt against the leadership. MacDonald and Co. were in a cleft stick, they feared the responsibility of leadership while the workers were still under the glamour of the general strike. They feared most of all a repetition of it. At the same time they were not prepared to give up the social position they had won by their opportunism which had raised them out of the ranks of the working class. From 1926 onwards saw a struggle for mastery between the lefts and rights. But the leadership had the organizational tricks of the trade and used them against the C.P. to great advantage.

The climax came when the famous Liverpool Conference of the National Labor Party carried a resolution on a card vote which said that all members must accept the constitution and rules of the Labor Party and must not be members of any political party opposed to the Labor Party. It is worth noting that at this time the C.P. members were only individual members of the Labor Party; at no time was the C.P. a part of it as the Socialist League is today. So that if the C.P. members signed any statement carrying out this decision they would have had to repudiate the existence of a separate Communist Party.

The leadership did not immediately take action against individuals but gradually weeded out the lefts by the following methods. They pounded every now and again upon local wards known to contain Communists, circulating the members asking them to sign new membership forms stating they accepted the constitution of the Labor Party and that they were not members of any other political party. In this way they wiped thousands of members off the books.

W. G. Sherwood, fraternal delegate to the American Federation of Labor Convention in 1927, from the British N.U.G.M.W., said:

"Branches of our organization in London over 15,000 strong refused to comply with our General Councils instructions. Well, Mr. President, we simply smashed the branches. . . . We had on our General Council two men who represented great areas in our country, but they were going to minority meetings and we said: Sign a declaration or get out. Well, they had to get out."

To which the President replied:

"We were made happy when we listened to those words. We felt that our position had been thoroughly vindicated, that the traditional course of the A. F. of L. had found additional approval of our older brothers across the sea."

It must be clear therefore that the leadership of the Labor Party smashed the traditionally accepted working class federal basis of the Labor Party without altering the rules or constitution of the Party in a broad sense, by using an organizational trick. But the constitution of the Labor Party is capable of such a wide interpretation that it may mean almost

anything, otherwise the Socialist League could not still remain in the Party.

The swing to the right of the MacDonaldites as soon as the C.P. were expelled took them right into the camp of the bourgeoisie. They took up Sir Alfred Mond's "Peace in Industry" slogan, set up negotiating machinery with the capitalist class in the place of the strike weapon, sabotaged workers' action of any kind, and in the place of socialism advocated socialization of industry thru public utility corporations, such as the London Passenger Transport Board. This still applies today.

The events on the continent and the rise of Hitler, Austria, the Abyssinian War, Spain, etc., have created a feeling among the workers of a need for working class unity independently of the C.P. or the labor leaders. The workers feel a sense of weakness in view of the trend of events and their natural reaction is for unity against fascism. This does not suit the leadership who see in it danger to their personal hold over the masses and they are putting up every obstacle to it.

Since the Seventh World Congress, the C.P. has mechanically attempted to carry out the new line, claiming that they are winning the workers to them, but they fail to realize it is not they who are winning the workers, but the workers are winning over the C.P., and, failing to understand, draw the incorrect conclusion that the new line is a success.

During the last parliamentary elections, they issued instructions to the C.P. rank and file to canvass and work for Labor Party candidates, and not to disclose the fact they were communists.

Following this, the C.P. made application for affiliation. This was correct, but the attitude of the C.P. was not that of a revolutionary party calling for unity as a primary need for defense against Fascism, but as a party which had lost its revolutionary identity and was crawling on its belly.

The correct line for a revolutionary Party in applying for affiliation should have been to demand (1) freedom to criticize; (2) the right to publish its own literature; (3) the right to hold meetings separate from Labor Party meetings.

It goes without saying that no party can apply for affiliation to another without being prepared to accept the Standing Orders and Parliamentary Whip, but no revolutionary party should be prepared to lose its identity completely.

So long as the Labor Party carries out its pledges and does nothing which is directly opposed to the workers' interests, there is no reason for not being prepared to accept the Labor Whip, but the C.P.'s attitude of uncritical support, its pandering to the leadership and its hypocritical mouthing, "Democracy, Democracy," has not only created deeper illusions in the minds of the workers as to the attitude they should accept towards bourgeois democracy, but is spoiling the C.P.'s chances of breaking away from the steady drift towards the complete merging of its identity with Social Democracy.

The I.L.P. has, of course, supported the C.P. affiliation, but only because it was compelled to by force of circumstances, because the Trotskyites have openly denounced the affiliation of the ground that it would mean the merging of a live and healthy body (the Labor Party), with a dead

and putrifying corpse (The C.I.). They passed resolutions to this effect through cooperative and trade union branches. One of these reads as follows:

"It has always been considered that the C.P. was a revolutionary Party, based upon Marxism-Leninism. Such a Party is diametrically opposed to Reformism. . . . Therefore the application of the Communist Party for affiliation . . . must be . . . for the following reasons: 1. A new insidious attempt to disrupt the Labor Movement from within. 2. The abandonment by the Communist Party of a revolutionary policy."

The hypocrisy of this is amazing since the Trotskyites have from time to time put forward a demand for affiliation, but the resolution tells us that a party based upon Marxism-Leninism is opposed to reformism and can only enter the Labor Party to disrupt it or to lose its identity. Why did they, a year or so ago, put forward the line of affiliation in the I.L.P.? Was it to lose their identity or to disrupt it? If either is the case, why should the Trotskyites not call the C.P. kettle black?

Before it became apparent that there was a widespread demand for the acceptance of the C.P.'s application for affiliation, the National Administrative Council said nothing about it and allowed the Trotskyites to do their damage. It (N.A.C.) committed itself when it became apparent that if something was not done it would become isolated completely in the struggle for workers' unity.

Gradually since the Seventh World Congress, the C.P. has watered down its revolutionary propaganda. Its speakers no longer talk of revolution but defense of democracy. Just recently it issued an election program for London in which not even the word Socialism was mentioned. On the Spanish situation, following the line of the People's Front, its members are selling among their own literature a publication by the Liberal paper, *The News Chronicle*, which urges the British government to intervene against the Spanish Fascists because the "British Empire is at stake". And Harry Pollitt tells the workers, in articles in the liberal bourgeois press, that "Spain's struggle is now being fought . . . which will decide the future of democracy, the will of the people and constitutional government. . . . The people of Spain are not fighting to establish Soviets, but for Democracy, social progress, collective security, and peace all over the world." And he says that those who say otherwise are "downright scoundrels or self-styled lefts."

If the C.P. continues on this line there will be no need for it to apply for affiliation to the Labor Party, but to disband and go into the Labor Party as individuals. There is now no difference between its propaganda and that of a Social Democratic Party.

But the tragedy of it all is this, that there is no revolutionary Party to show the workers the correct road.

Never before in Britain has there been a greater need for working class unity. There is not only the danger of Fascism and war to fight, but also the attacks of the National Government on the workers' standards thru the Means Test. There is a need for unity in the rank and file against the terrible weaknesses of the leadership of the Trade Union Congress and Labor Movement, against the sabotage of strikes, etc. The workers should be made to feel strong again, strong enough to fight Fascism and

Capitalism. That confidence can only be raised thru workers unity in common struggle. But unity must never be achieved at the cost the C.P. seems prepared to pay—the loss of its revolutionary principles.

Affiliation to the Labor Party is advocated by the British C.P.O. This is the road to unity, but affiliation must mean that the C.P. and the I.L.P. be allowed (1) to put forward its own propaganda; (2) criticise the leadership; (3) have the right of holding its own business meetings.

For unless these rights are jermitted, there is no revolutionary party to guide the workers in a critical period.

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